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THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 6 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES

CELEBRATING MAHAVIR JAYANTI

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Nepal's **SC refuses to provide interim relief to ex-PM K P Sharma Oli**, arrested over 2025 Gen Z movement crackdown, but the **court asks authorities to submit a written explanation** clarifying legal grounds for his detention

Banks cannot see or record what valuables customers store in lockers, as it would lead to a breach of banking regulations, says finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in LS, rules out differential insurance cover based on contents

China's national carrier **Air China resumes flights between Beijing and Pyongyang following a six-year suspension**, as reclusive North Korea gradually opens up after sealing its borders during Covid-19 pandemic

Italian world No. 2 **Jannik Sinner beats Jiri Lehecka 6-4, 6-4 in a rain-hit Miami Open final** to become the first man to complete the coveted 'Sunshine Double' without dropping a set

Trump threatens to blow up Iran's oil island if deal not reached soon

Says Its Drinking Water Infra Will Also Be Targeted

Chidanand Rajghatta

Washington: US President **Donald Trump** on Monday threatened to annihilate Iran as a nation, threatening its drinking water infrastructure, energy grid, and its oil wells

FULL COVERAGE
P 6, 10, 12 & 15

unless it capitulated in ongoing talks — which Tehran denies are taking place.

In a series of confounding posts and statements that appeared to be aimed at turning the heat on a defiant Iran, Trump said Washington is in "serious discussions with A NEW, AND MORE REASONABLE, REGIME" without identifying the interlocutors.

"Great progress has been made but, if for any reason a deal is not shortly reached... and if the Hormuz Strait is not immediately 'Open for Business', we will conclude our lovely 'stay' in Iran by blowing up and completely obliterating all of their Electric Generating Plants, Oil Wells and Kharg Island (and possibly all desalinisation plants!), which we have purposefully not yet 'touched'," Trump warned in a social media post on Monday. Trump's threat came even as Iran defiantly continued to strike US assets in the region.

▶Doha facility, P 10

IRAN LEADERSHIP FRACTURED: RUBIO

- In rare admission, **Trump hints at differences among his top aides on Iran**, saying intel chief Tulsi **Gabbard is 'softer'** than him on curbing Tehran's nuclear ambitions
- US secy of state Marco Rubio, on other hand, claims 'fractures' in Iran's leadership. **Says US has privately received positive messages**
- US airstrike at Iran's Mashhad airport **damages aircraft reportedly scheduled to fly to Delhi this week to carry medical supplies** and aid. Israel targets Rev Guards' key military varsity
- **Indian killed** in Iranian attack on **Kuwaiti power and desalination plant**. Iran denies involvement
- **3 UN peacekeepers killed** in Lebanon in past 24 hours

▶ Spot buying of LNG to help ramp up urea output, P 6 ▶ Indian nat'l killed in attack on power plant in Kuwait, P 6

No direct talks, Pak's forums its own, says Iran

The fate of talks for a deal to end the war appeared uncertain as Iran maintained no direct talks were taking place with the US and that peace proposals it received via intermediaries were "excessive, unrealistic and irrational". No updates emerged either from negotiations among regional foreign ministers in Islamabad that concluded Monday.

The Consulate General of Iran in Mumbai said there have been no direct talks with US, only demands passed through intermediaries. It posted on X: "US 'diplomacy' flips constantly; our stance is clear. Pakistan's forums are their own; we didn't participate. Regional calls to end war are welcome, but remember who started it!" P 10

₹ crosses 95/$, settles at record low of 94.8

The rupee breached the 95-mark against the dollar to hit a lifetime low of 95.22 before ending at 94.83, a new closing low, during a volatile trading session Monday. **This has been the rupee's worst financial year in a decade.**

Reserve Bank of India's directive forcing banks to liquidate dollar positions above $100 million initially pushed the exchange rate below 93, gaining over 120 paise against the dollar, but it rebounded to the 94 level amid strong demand for dollars.

The rupee later breached all previous levels to touch a new low as the US-Israel-Iran conflict intensified. The rupee has depreciated around 4% since the start of the geopolitical conflict. P 15

Raj HC tears into transgender bill: 'Gender identity is a right'

Ajay Parmar | TNN

Jodhpur: Calling the state's existing reservation policy for trans persons "mere façade and an eyewash", Rajasthan HC on Monday directed the govt to grant an additional 3% weightage in marks to transgender candidates applying for jobs and admissions to educational institutes.

HC also made scathing remarks on the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill 2026, recently passed by Parliament, stating it seeks to take away the "right to self-determination or self-proclamation of being a third gender". This was a deviation from the "constitutional baseline", as articulated by Supreme Court in its landmark 'NALSA vs Union of India' judgment, HC said, stating that "selfhood is not a matter of concession, it is a matter of right".

> What was recognised by the Supreme Court as an inviolable aspect of personhood now **risks being reduced to a contingent, state-mediated entitlement... Selfhood** is not a matter of concession, it **is a matter of right**
> — Rajasthan HC

NALSA judgment recognises trans persons as the third gender, guarantees their right to self-identification, and affirms their fundamental rights, directs govt to treat them as socially and educationally backward and provide affirmative action benefits.

▶Rebukes Raj policy, P 14

Interfaith live-in no offence, says Allahabad HC

Prayagraj: Interfaith live-in relationships are not prohibited and are not an offence under any law, Allahabad high court has ruled on a petition filed by a couple seeking protection from the woman's family, **reports Rajesh Kumar Pandey**.

▶State's duty to protect couples, says court, P 5

The couple had sought a direction against the woman's family not to interfere in their peaceful life. They said they had approached police, to no avail.

▶No FIR filed: Govt, P 14

IN THE COURTS

- **K'taka HC raps RTO after an officer seized a Mercedes** in the midst of legal proceedings, describing the action as unwarranted & improper | P 2
- 'Irregularity, not illegality': **SC quashes retrial ordered by Allahabad high court** in 2007 murder case over technicality
- **Fast-track court**, set up by HC for day-to-day trial proceedings in **Zubeen Garg's death case, begins hearing**
- HC **quashes conviction of Punjab AAP MLA** Manjinder Lalpura in molestation case
- Children born out of wedlock are entitled to pension benefits, rules Calcutta high court | P 11
- Man **acquitted after 4 yrs in jail**, UP court orders FIR against woman for false charges | P 11
- HC notice to Army, CBI, Centre on plea for **whereabouts of manuscripts, books seized during Op Blue Star** | P 5

Lawmakers to get 3 free tickets for IPL, 2 for int'ls

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Bengaluru: Deputy CM D K Shivakumar Monday said Karnataka legislators would be allotted three complimentary tickets each for Indian Premier League (IPL) matches and two for international cricket fixtures in the city, with an option to buy two additional tickets for international games.

Speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence here, Shivakumar said the decision followed his meetings with officials of Karnataka State Cricket Association, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), and DNA Networks to thrash out allocation of tickets for elected representatives.

He clarified that since tickets for the season-opening IPL match on Saturday between RCB and Sunrisers Hyderabad had already been sold, only two tickets could be provided to legislators.

▶Intervention minimal, P 3

'MATTER CLOSED'

- **WHAT LEGISLATORS GET:** Three IPL complimentary tickets, two for international matches & they can also buy 2 additional tickets for int'l games

> The matter is now closed. Those not interested (in obtaining tickets) can inform us in writing; there's no compulsion
> **D K Shivakumar** | DCM

Shah: Talks on with only active top Maoist

Union home minister Amit Shah on Monday said talks were on with the only active member of the CPI (Maoist) central committee, while others have either surrendered or have been killed. Though he didn't mention a name, the reference seemed to be to Mihir Besra, who is active in Jharkhand region. P 8

Opium cultivators killed tiger: Probe

A radio-collared tiger found dead in the forests of Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh, was thought to be poisoned over livestock loss. But probe reveals opium farmers killed it to keep away forest officials tracking it. A poisoned bull was used as bait to target it, officials said. P 5

Highway toll up on major city corridors

NHAI has hiked toll rates effective April 1 on major Bengaluru corridors, including Bengaluru–Chennai Expressway, STRR between Dabaspet and Hoskote, Mysuru Highway, Kanakapura Road and Ballari Road to KIA. P 2

50 forest guards watch over a chick

A great Indian bustard chick, which hatched on March 26 and is the first born in Gujarat's wild in a decade, has a team of 50 forest guards watching over it. The govt is leaving nothing to chance to ensure its survival. P 5

Navyman kills lover, puts body parts in fridge

Visakhapatnam: A 30-year-old Navy petty officer was arrested on Monday for allegedly murdering a woman he was in a relationship with, dismembering her body and storing a body part in his fridge at his rented home before surrendering to police, **reports Nalla Babu.**

Chintada Ravindra, posted at INS Dega, allegedly killed Polipalli Mounika, 31, at his flat in LV Nagar — a residential locality in southwest Vizag — late Sunday while his wife was away visiting her parents. He later walked into Gajuwaka police station and confessed. Police commissioner Sankhabrata Bagchi said Ravindra had known Mounika since 2021 after meeting her on a dating app.

▶'Trapped daughter', P 14

Census 2027 from April 1, digital mode means data will be available same yr

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New Delhi: A good share of Census 2027 datasets may be released in the same year, thanks to capturing of data in digital mode right from the outset, Registrar General of India and census commissioner Mritunjay Kumar Narayan assured ahead of launch of Census 2027, the world's largest and India's first-ever digital population data capture.

"Earlier, census data was first collected on paper and then digitised, making compilation a time-consuming process. Collection of data digitally will ensure Census 2027 datasets are out much faster," he said.

▶ Questions to capture caste info yet to be finalised, P 14

'DATA CONFIDENTIAL'

- Census commissioner M K Narayan hopes a good percentage of people will opt for **self-enumeration, a first in history of Indian census**
- All states and UTs, barring Bengal, will hold **houselisting ops between April and Sept. Popn enumeration in Feb**
- Narayan assures individual data recorded during Census 2027 will be kept strictly confidential

Appealing to citizens to participate whole-heartedly in the census, Narayan asked them to furnish accurate information as census data is key for shaping policy and socio-economic interventions.

▶Self-enumeration, P 14

BDA calls tenders for 1st phase of 73km biz corridor

BDA has floated tenders for the first 23km phase of the rebranded Bengaluru Business Corridor between Tumkur and Airport roads, costing Rs 3,348 crore with a three-year deadline, reports **Sanjay Murty.**

Land acquisition for the 73km corridor has been the main hurdle. At least 80% of the land has to be acquired to call for tenders.

Farmers and Landowners' Association has termed the tender invitation 'contempt of court'. P 3

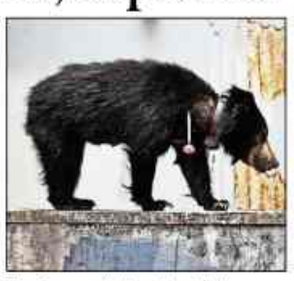
Sloth bear enters airport in Shivamogga after 50-km trek in 24 hours, captured

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Shivamogga: State forest department officials Monday captured an eight-year-old female sloth bear that had travelled nearly 50km in 24 hours, straying through residential areas before entering the premises of Shivamogga's Rashtrakavi Kuvempu Airport at Sogane village.

The bear was later moved to an observation cell at Shivamogga Zoo, where it was reported to be stable.

Sources told **TOI** the GPS-collared animal, which had been translocated to Bhadra wildlife division on March 27 after it was captured near JSW factory in Toranagallu, Vijayanagara district, broke free and surprisingly began its long trek back towards human habitation.



The 8-year-old female sloth bear was moved to an observation cell after being tranquilised on Monday

Before entering the airport's compound, the bear was spotted in Vinayaka Nagar and Jyoti Nagar, where residents filmed it wandering through gardens and private properties, triggering concern, though it caused no harm.

▶ Recently translocated, P4

Differed with HDFC board over action on bonds: Atanu

Mumbai: Former HDFC Bank chairman **Atanu Chakraborty**, who quit the bank on March 18, citing "incongruence" between his values and certain internal practices, has disputed managing director Sashidhar Jagadishan's claim that action against employees over the sale of high-risk bonds to Gulf customers was unrelated to the boardroom dispute.

In an interview to CNBC, Chakraborty said, "The incentive structures and the oversight of the management and the board should ensure that they are aligned with the interests of depositors, shareholders, and the public at large."

▶ Governance issues, P 16

Def Leppard's guitarist buys B'luru artist's work

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A slice of Bengaluru's art found its rockstar moment when Vivian Campbell, guitarist of legendary British rock band Def Leppard, picked up a work by city-based artist Devika Sundar.

The piece — part of Devika's series Adrift and at Sea — was acquired for approximately $800 during a private viewing organised for the band while they were in the city for their show, as part of the ongoing Bengaluru Art Weekend curated by Raihan Vadra.

The rock band was in India on a three-city headline tour: It played in Shillong on March 25 and Mumbai on March 27 before winding up its hugely successful run with a gig at Bengaluru on March 29.

Vivian Campbell with the artwork. Speaking about her work, B'luru's Devika Sundar said: "It explores the inner world of the human body"

"I just heard about the purchase, and I'm so glad my work resonated with members of Def Leppard," said Devika.

▶ Tea for vintage touch, 2

Nepal health minister a nurse trained by AIIMS

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New Delhi: In the wards of AIIMS Delhi, Nisha Mehta trained as a nurse. Today, she stands at the helm of Nepal's healthcare system. An alumna of the institution's College of Nursing (2006–2010), Mehta's appointment as Nepal's health minister is seen as a milestone not just for the facility but for the entire nursing profession.

Those who knew her as a student recall a personality that did not seek attention, but stood out nonetheless.

Dr Latha Venkatesan, principal of her alma mater, said that Mehta was an active and well-rounded student, balancing academics with co-curricular activities while handling responsibilities with ease. She was organised, dependable and had strong interpersonal skills.

'BRIGHT, EFFICIENT'

- Current and ex-principals of nursing college remember **Nisha Mehta** as a **bright student**, disciplined and efficient
- **Say she wasn't politically active** in student years. Educators say her journey reflects the power of professional grounding
- Nisha among 5 women in Nepal's 15-member cabinet

▶Leadership traits, P 14

At least 25 phones go missing during RCB-SRH clash

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A few IPL fans had a bitter experience last Saturday during the match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), as at least 25 spectators lost their mobile phones. However, police clarified that it is not confirmed that all the phones were stolen inside the stadium; some people may have lost their phones outside the stadium and only realised they were missing upon entering or exiting the venue.

At least seven suspects have been identified and are being interrogated. As of now, the suspects are minors and only being questioned. There is no confirmation on whether they were involved in the thefts or are part of an organised syndicate. One of the victims, Ritu Tiwary, a digital creator, posted about the ordeal on Instagram, saying her husband's phone was stolen. Ritu said, "It's my request — please be careful about your phones if you are attending an IPL match, because yesterday at least 50 to 60 phones were stolen from P3 stand alone, including my husband's. My husband realised his phone was missing after the first innings when he went to get us some drinking water."

"Then we approached the stadium police for help, but they were least interested. So we went to the police station, where many people were already complaining about similar incidents. We lodged an FIR. They have allegedly caught 10 to 12 kids, and they were all minors dressed in jerseys and had complimentary tickets. I think this is an organised crime because, when I searched online, similar incidents were reported at the Chennai and Wankhede stadiums as well. These incidents mostly happen during the second innings, when people step out for refreshments. I request strict action and better security, or this will continue in upcoming matches," she added.

Joint commissioner of police (west) C Vamsi Krishna said, "It is not correct to generalise that the phones were lost inside the stadium. That is based on where victims realise the loss. It may have occurred inside or outside (the stadium). I myself found an elderly person who lost his phone at CTO Junction and made his e-lost report. It will take time for us to piece together the sequence of events. We are investigating the matter and registering FIRs for all e-lost reports. We will not spare anyone if theft is confirmed."

Another senior officer said the minors detained are at a reformation centre. "We cannot confirm that they are accused yet; they are only suspects. No one was allowed inside the cricket stadium without a valid ticket."

"The numbers mentioned by Tiwary may not be accurate, and the claims about minors being caught are also under verification. All the statements made by Tiwary and others are part of the ongoing investigation," the officer added.

Syed Asif

BITTERSWEET RETURN: At least 25 spectators reported missing phones, though cops say some may have been lost outside Chinnaswamy Stadium

> In general, during large gatherings, such incidents are reported. Victims often mention the place where they realised the loss of device, not necessarily where it occurred. We cannot rule out the possibility of someone with a valid ticket committing theft. It would be premature to draw any conclusions
>
> — Senior police officer

3 cops suspended for turning off cams, taking money from bikers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Three High Grounds traffic police station personnel have been suspended for allegedly stopping motorists without reason and collecting money while keeping their body cameras switched off.

Deputy commissioner of police (traffic, west) Anoop A Shetty took action a week ago against assistant sub-inspector Suresh G and constables Prashanth K and Sadik SB, following a departmental probe into multiple accusations. Shetty told **TOI** that the trio was caught red-handed at Basaveshwara Circle while stopping vehicles with their body-worn cameras switched off and allegedly collecting money from motorists.

According to a senior officer, the three would frequently turn off their cameras and stop vehicles despite there being no visible traffic violations. They would check vehicle documents and pending fines, and allegedly collect bribes from such motorists. Many motorists had orally complained against the trio to High Grounds traffic police station.

There are clear instructions from the DG& IGP and the police commissioner to traffic police personnel to stop motorists only in cases of visible violations, except during special drink-and-drive drives. Cops have been instructed to keep body-worn cameras switched on while stopping vehicles and booking cases.

NH toll up, pay ₹5-15 more on swift drives from tomorrow

Airport Route To Be Hit By Toll Revision

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: That easy cruise down a national highway comes with a toll bite: National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has marginally increased toll on major corridors effective April 1, as per a notification.

The revised rates apply to Bengaluru-Chennai expressway (Hoskote–KGF stretch within Karnataka), Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR) between Dabaspet and Hoskote, Bengaluru–Mysuru access-controlled highway, Kanakapura Road, Ballari Road leading to Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) and other NHs. At Sadahalli toll gate on Kempegowda International Airport Road (Ballari Road), the single-trip fee for cars remains unchanged at Rs 120, but the return journey fee has been increased from Rs 180 to Rs 185. The monthly pass for 50 trips now costs Rs 4,070.

APRIL BLUES

For light commercial vehicles (LCV/LGV) and minibuses, toll has gone up by Rs 5, with single-trip charges rising from Rs 185 to Rs 190 and return fares from Rs 275 to Rs 280. Monthly passes are priced at Rs 6,255.

Truck and bus operators will see a hike of Rs 5 to Rs 15. Single-trip charges have been revised to Rs 375, while return journeys will now cost Rs 565. The monthly pass stands at Rs 12,575. The increase is likely to have a cascading impact on bus fares, particularly for services operated by BMTC, which runs extensive routes to the airport and surrounding towns such as Devanahalli and Chikkaballapur. Air passengers may end up paying for Vayu Vajra services.

On STRR corridor, toll for cars has been increased by Rs 5. At the Nelluru-Devanahalli plaza, single-trip charges stand at Rs 75, with return journeys costing Rs 125 and monthly passes at Rs 2,805. At Hulikunte, cars will pay Rs 110 for a single trip and Rs 160 for return journeys, with monthly passes priced at Rs 3,595.

Many fluctuations

NHAI has revised toll on the 72km operational stretch of Bengaluru-Chennai expressway between Hoskote and KGF (Bethamangala). Across four toll plazas — Hedaginabele, Agrahara, Krishnapura, and Sundarapalya — car users will pay around Rs 150 for a single trip and up to Rs 225 for return journeys, with monthly passes ranging between Rs 4,860 and Rs 4,985 depending on direction.

Notably, toll rates on this stretch have seen fluctuations. After initially charging expressway-level tolls when the stretch opened last year, NHAI reduced rates in Feb 2026, citing incomplete sections. With only 72km of the 261km corridor operational, the authority is now levying tolls on a par with NH rates rather than full expressway pricing.

For Bengaluru–Mysuru access-controlled highway, the toll for cars has been increased by Rs 5. At Kaniminike, single-journey toll has been revised from Rs 175 to Rs 180, while return journey fee has gone up from Rs 260 to Rs 265.

At Ganaguru toll plaza, single-journey fee has increased from Rs 170 to Rs 175, and return journey one from Rs 255 to Rs 260. As per the revised rates, a one-way trip between Bengaluru and Mysuru will cost Rs 355.

File photo

On B'luru–Chennai expressway between Hoskote and Bethamangala (KGF)

FOR CARS

Sundarapalya (KGF side) to Hedaginabele (Hoskote side)

- Single journey: 150
- Return journey: 225
- Monthly pass: 4,985

Hegadinabele (Hoskote side) to Sundrapalya (KGF side)

- Single journey: 145
- Return journey: 220
- Monthly pass: 4,860

WHAT YOU NEED TO SHELL OUT

At Sadahalli Gate (KIA Road)

Vehicle type	Single journey	Return journey	Monthly pass
Car/jeep	120 (no change)	185 (180)	4,070
LCV/mini-bus	190 (185)	280 (275)	6,255
Truck/bus	375 (370)	565 (550)	12,575

- All figures in ₹ | Source: NHAI

Power tariff sees 2nd hike

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Bengaluru: Commercial and industrial consumers in Karnataka are staring at a double whammy on their monthly electricity bills, with Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) likely to revise the current tariff anywhere between 35 and 45 paise per unit.

The fresh hike, according to sources in the energy sector, will kick in from April even as consumers continue to bear the burden of a recent revision by KERC, ranging from 10 to 95 paise for various categories, in the first week of March to help Escoms overcome revenue shortfall. Even though the likely revision is unlikely to pinch domestic consumers due to govt's Gruha Jyothi scheme, the hike is set to burn a hole in the pockets for those not covered by it. The latest hike is expected to be rolled out after the April 9 bypolls.

Pointing at revenue losses of close to Rs 5,000 crore incurred during the fiscal, Escoms, in their annual performance review before KERC, had sought an average hike of 68 paise per unit. However, KERC, after holding public consultations over the past few weeks, is likely to allow revision of 35-45 paise per unit, sources said.

100 sanitation workers' kin not entitled to relief or jobs

Bengaluru: The families of over 100 deceased sanitation workers, whose services were regularised under the erstwhile BBMP (now GBA), are not entitled to any compensation or jobs after their deaths.

This is because their services were regularised under supernumerary posts from May 2025. "Even in the earlier direct payment system before regularisation, compensation of Rs 10 lakh would be given to the family of the deceased pourakarmika. Currently, there is neither compensation nor a compassionate job. The families only receive Rs 15,000 for last rites," Karnataka State Municipal Pourakarmikas' Union state chief general secretary Muniraju said.

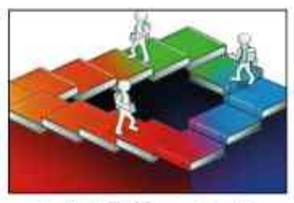
"Jobs are given to children or kin of deceased govt staff, according to Karnataka Civil Services Rules. However, none of the families of those regularised since May 2025 have been given a job after the worker's death," Muniraju added.

GBA deputy commissioner (admin) Ravindra Karalingannavar said compassionate posting in case of supernumerary posts was a policy decision and needed to be decided by govt. TNN

Class 1 age rule row continues despite 60-day relaxation

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: After govt announced a 60-day relaxation for admissions to kindergarten and class 1, some parents are now seeking further relaxation. They want govt to make five and a half years the cut-off for admission to class 1, as was done last year.



In July 2022, govt had issued an order fixing the age of admission at six years. However, this was not implemented following protests from parents. This year too, parents approached the school education department against the rule, forcing govt to announce a two-month waiver.

Last Thursday, govt relaxed the age criteria for class 1 by 60 days for the academic year 2026-27.

Speaking at the legislative assembly, minister for school education Madhu Bangarappa said the relaxation will be applicable to LKG and UKG admissions too. Thus, this year, a child who is 5 years and 10 months old as of June 1 is eligible for admission. The new rule applies to all govt, aided, and private schools across curricula: state, CBSE, ICSE, and international.

However, another group of parents is unhappy. "It is unfair on our children as they have made a relaxation to benefit only a few. So our children are being forced to repeat kindergarten. This will cause emotional stress on them, including loss of confidence. Additionally, it is a financial burden on us," said a parent.

"Last year, govt said it would never relax the rule again. But it has announced a 60-day relaxation this time. This helps only half the parents. Either it should give full relaxation and bring the age limit back down to five and a half years, or stick to the original stand," said BV Yogananda, president of Karnataka Private School and Colleges Parents' Association. "Moreover, govt should immediately release the new regulation for kindergarten admissions so that this does not repeat," he added.

Land-lease norm reduced to 15 years

Yielding to the demand of private schools, govt has amended its rules, reducing the mandatory land lease requirement from 30 years to 15 for running educational institutions.

In a gazetted notification, govt stated that every private body wanting to establish an educational institution imparting pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher secondary education should own or have on lease land registered for a minimum period of 15 years.

The institutions should submit RTC / e-khata / khata document as proof of land ownership. "Govt has listened to our request to change the lease period. Meanwhile, there are some other issues that need clarity. We will be raising them with state govt soon," said Shashi Kumar D, secretary of Association of Primary and Secondary Schools of Karnataka.

Govt has also decided to charge schools for change in governing council or location. For change in location, fees are: Rs 50,000 for primary school, Rs 75,000 for secondary school, and Rs 1 lakh for higher secondary school.

Meanwhile, the fee for change in governing council is Rs 1 lakh, Rs 1.5 lakh and Rs 2 lakh, respectively. TNN

HC pulls up RTO after officer seizes Merc, cancels registration amid legal proceedings

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Bengaluru: Karnataka high court has castigated the regional transport office (RTO) after one of its officers unilaterally confiscated a high-end car in the midst of legal proceedings, describing the authority's action as unwarranted and highly improper.

The case refers to the purchase of the car from a bank and its subsequent confiscation alleging documents were forged. The court said RTO officers are representatives of the state and are expected to act with fairness and a sense of public duty.

Nihal Ahmed from Mangaluru had bought a Mercedes-AMG G 63 from Bengaluru's Sundaram Motors for Rs 1.9 crore with an HDFC Bank loan. On March 21, 2023, he sold the vehicle to a third party in Delhi without the lender's knowledge.

During investigation, Delhi police seized the vehicle and registered an FIR against Amar Motors, represented by Harmanpreet Singh Walia, for criminal conspiracy and cheating. Aggrieved by the seizure, HDFC Bank approached the chief metropolitan magistrate, New Delhi. The court passed an order in favour of HDFC Bank.

On Aug 1, 2024, Nihal wrote to the bank, seeking an amicable settlement. On Sept 10 and 14, 2024, petitioner Neeraj Kumar Sharma, from Mangaluru, paid Rs 62.5 lakh through ICICI Bank towards the purchase of the vehicle.

In parallel, armed with the court order, HDFC Bank took possession of the vehicle on Sept 17, 2024, placed it for auction, and the vehicle loan was settled through a one-time settlement of Rs 62.5 lakh. The car was later registered temporarily in Sharma's name.

On June 15, 2025, when the vehicle was parked in Mysuru, RTO officials confiscated it, alleging documents were not in order. They revoked its registration.

Neeraj challenged the action in the high court. The govt contended that the petitioner had fabricated documents. Justice Jyoti M said Ranjit, an RTO officer posted at Bangalore (south) office, was merely assigned the responsibility of submitting a report under the supervision of regional transport officer, Mysore (west). However, he exceeded his brief and seized the vehicle. The court said such action appears to be arbitrary and is liable to be deprecated.

"Cancellation of registration during pendency of the writ petition is legally untenable and cannot be sustained, as the subject matter is sub judice," the judge said, directing RTO to restore registration and hand over the vehicle to the petitioner.

> It is shocking to note that despite pendency of the writ petition before this court, the respondent authorities have chosen to cancel the vehicle's registration. Such action ... appears to be arbitrary and deserves to be condemned. Once this court is seized of the matter, any precipitative action is wholly unwarranted. Cancellation of registration of vehicle is legally untenable as it's sub judice. Govt action appears to be a flagrant disregard for court proceedings
>
> — Karnataka high court

AI

AI may be used to park cars, trace violators

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GBA plans AI-enabled paid parking system in key areas like Jayanagar and Koramangala, aiming to curb congestion. But the idea faces concerns over residential impact

Bengaluru: An AI-enabled paid parking system is proposed to be rolled out in key areas of the city, with Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) preparing to implement the model in Jayanagar, HSR Layout, Cubbon Park, and Koramangala.

"The system, designed to regulate unorganised roadside parking and ease congestion, will be fully digital and app-based. Motorists will be required to park only in designated slots identified through a mobile application, with real-time monitoring enabled through artificial intelligence. Vehicles parked outside authorised zones will be flagged automatically, triggering alerts to towing personnel and inviting penalties," said a senior GBA official.

According to GBA officials, a Chennai-based private firm will handle operations, including mapping parking spaces, integrating payment systems and managing enforcement. "This is a technology-driven intervention aimed at bringing discipline to on-street parking. AI will help us monitor violations in real time and ensure compliance without manual intervention," a senior official said.

The authority has plans to impose parking fees of Rs 30 per hour for two-wheelers and Rs 50 per hour for cars, with payments to be made through QR codes and the app. "Cities across the world have adopted structured paid parking to manage limited road space efficiently. Bengaluru, as a leading IT city, must move in that direction," another GBA official noted.

However, the proposal has raised concerns among traffic police and local stakeholders. Police officials have objected to the inclusion of residential streets, cautioning that charging fees in such areas — many of which are already notified as parking zones — could lead to public resistance. "A calibrated approach is needed, especially in residential neighbourhoods," a senior traffic official said.

The proposal comes as GBA is making preparations for the civic elections.

AI

Used tea, watercolours & pen for vintage touch, says artist

▸ Continued from page 1

This piece is part of a larger body of work that explores the inner world of the human body — a body that is felt, not necessarily seen. I've been focusing on the relationship between our bodies and natural waterbodies like the ocean," Devika added. "It stems from my interest in Eastern medicine and Ayurveda, and how they approach the body and healing. I've used tea, watercolours and pen to give the work the feel of a vintage manuscript," the artist said.

Planning to use firewood? Doctors say it's bad idea

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Bengaluru: Thinking of switching to cooking with firewood amid the ongoing LPG crisis? It is a bad idea, warn clinicians, as exposure to fumes from firewood can have several adverse effects — both short-term and long-term — on health.

BURNER WOES

Doctors say the renewed interest in firewood and other biomass fuels, driven by LPG supply disruptions and rising costs, risks reversing years of progress made in reducing household air pollution through a transition to cleaner fuels.

"Whenever non-renewable material like charcoal or biomass such as firewood is burned, it releases harmful gases and poses a health hazard to the person who is cooking," said Dr Satyanarayana Mysore, chairman, HOD & consultant, pulmonology, sleep medicine & lung transplant physician, Manipal Hospitals, Old Airport Road. He added that the risks go beyond emissions. "From soot deposition to worsening airway health parameters in people who are in the cooking area, biomass fuel leads to chronic obstructive airflow diseases, worsen asthma, and create instability in terms of allergic rhinitis or even upper airway resistance syndromes."

Echoing this, Dr Sachin D, consultant, clinical and interventional pulmonology, critical care and sleep disorders, Kauvery Hospitals, Electronics City, pointed to both immediate and long-term health effects. "Cooking with firewood emits a lot of smoke that contains particulate matter (PM2.5), carbon monoxide, and several other toxic gases. On inhalation, these can have both short-term and long-term impacts on overall health. Short-term effects may include a burning sensation in the eyes, throat, and sinuses, along with a cough, headache, and a feeling of nausea."

"In the long term, this exposure can significantly impact the lungs and lead to a gradual decline in lung function. It may begin to affect air exchange in the lungs and can result in conditions such as emphysema," he said.

Doctors also cautioned that the impact extends beyond individuals to entire households. "The home environment is also affected, and the impact is not just on individual health, but also a kind of collateral damage for the entire household, especially if the kitchen is poorly ventilated. Worst of all, if there are children whose lungs are still developing, they are particularly vulnerable," said Dr Ravindra Mehta, interventional pulmonologist and founder & director, Vaayu Chest & Sleep Specialists.

Bharathi AV, senior dietitian and HOD of nutrition & dietetics at Hosmat Hospital, Magrath Road, elaborated: "The perception that food cooked on firewood is healthier is common, but medically speaking, the food itself is not significantly 'healthier' simply because it is cooked on firewood. The perceived benefits are largely related to taste or traditional cooking methods rather than any proven nutritional superiority. In reality, the health risk lies in the smoke exposure during cooking, not in the food itself. While occasional use may not be harmful, regular exposure outweighs any perceived benefits of smoky or traditional preparation."

If firewood use is unavoidable, doctors recommend minimising exposure through better ventilation and safer cooking practices. Cooking in well-ventilated spaces, using chimneys or exhaust systems, and opting for improved or smokeless stoves can help reduce risks. However, clinicians caution that these measures offer only limited protection. "Very few effective precautions are feasible when cooking with open fuel sources such as firewood, coal, or kerosene," Dr Ravindra noted.

PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE

- Ensure good ventilation (windows, chimney, exhaust)
- Limit time spent near smoke
- Keep children & other vulnerable people away
- Use dry wood and improved/ smokeless stoves
- Avoid burning damp wood, plastic or waste
- Seek medical help in case any symptoms appear

— Source: City doctors

Small is big: With 6.3L enterprises, B'luru drives state's MSME growth

But Poor Infra, High Land Costs & Rising Power Tariffs Remain Worrisome

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Bengaluru: It's a finding that reaffirms Bengaluru's status as industrial and entrepreneurial hub. The tech city anchors Karnataka's Micro, Small and Medium Industries (MSME) growth story, with Bengaluru Urban district accounting for 6.3 lakh enterprises and generating 51 lakh jobs, highest in the state, according to Karnataka Economic Survey 2025-26.

Bengaluru Rural and regions around host 1.1 lakh units which offer 1.1 lakh jobs.

On the flip side, industries in urban and industrially developed districts, particularly those around Bengaluru, have logged robust growth, while several northern and coastal districts have shown steady — yet moderate — growth.

Karnataka has 24.8 lakh MSMEs, employing over 2.3 crore as of Dec 31, 2025. Micro enterprises dominate with 24.5 lakh units, compared to 31,479 small and 2,296 medium enterprises, highlighting the sector's dependence on small-scale operations. Beyond Bengaluru, Belagavi (1.7 lakh units, 12.8 lakh jobs), Tumakuru, and Mysuru have emerged as key contributors, while districts like Kodagu and Uttara Kannada stay far behind.

HOW THEY ARE DISTRIBUTED IN KARNATAKA

Top five districts with most MSMEs

Rank	District	Total units	Total employment
1	Bengaluru Urban	6.3 lakh	51 lakh
2	Belagavi	1.7 lakh	12.8 lakh
3	Mysuru	1.4 lakh	11.5 lakh
4	Bengaluru Rural	1.1 lakh	11.7 lakh
5	Tumakuru	96,537	9 lakh

Sector-wise top three districts

Micro industries
- Bengaluru Urban: **6.2 lakh units**
- Belagavi: **Nearly 1.7 lakh**
- Mysuru: **1.3 lakh**

Small industries
- Bengaluru Urban: **13,971 units**
- Bengaluru Rural: **1,523**
- Mysuru: **1,297**

Medium industries
- Bengaluru Urban: **1,333 units**
- Bengaluru Rural: **145**
- Dakshina Kannada: **80**

Source: Karnataka Economic Survey 2025-26

Bad roads affect supply

Redefinition of MSME has shifted some larger firms into the medium category, reducing targeted support for micro and small units. Infrastructure remains a bottleneck, with poor roads in industrial areas affecting logistics and supply chains.

As reported by TOI on Oct 6, 2025, Karnataka lost 1% of its exports due to infrastructure bottlenecks in Bengaluru.

BP Shashidhar, vice-president of Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said: "While policies look good on paper, industries continue to struggle due to poor infrastructure, high land costs and rising power tariffs. Industrial areas lack proper roads and basic facilities, affecting the movement of materials and business operations. Banks are lending, but support beyond loans is limited. MSMEs produce everything from pins to aerospace components and are the backbone of large industries, but without consistent support, their growth remains constrained."

Expenses rise

Rahul Goyal, who owns a hardware store on SJP Road, said: "The govt has allowed traders like us to register under MSME Act, which is a good step. We're not deriving any benefit, since most of the schemes are aimed only at manufacturers. We do not derive the benefits like discounted stall booking rates in exhibitions, collateral-free loans from banks, lower rentals, exemption from registration under GBA Trade Licence, and similar aspects. Further, in case of payment defaults by customers, there is no active mechanism in the MSME Act to recover such payments, thereby diluting the cause for traders to register under this Act."

K Ravi, senior vice-president, Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce, said: "Industrial land has become expensive, forcing many micro and small enterprises to operate from privately owned areas that lack basic infrastructure. The govt must step in with affordable long-term lease or rent-to-own models, especially in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, along with compact, well-serviced industrial parks and plug-and-play facilities. At the same time, MSMEs face acute skilled manpower shortages, high labour compliance costs and limited access to bank credit, as they are often seen as high-risk borrowers. A separate minimum wage framework for micro and small units, along with easier financing, is essential to sustain and grow the sector."

BDA invites tenders for biz corridor's ₹3k-cr lst package

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Bengaluru: BDA has invited tenders for the long-delayed Peripheral Ring Road project, now rebranded as Bengaluru Business Corridor (BBC). However, the tenders are only for the first package of BBC, which involves a 23km stretch between Tumakuru Road and Kempegowda International Airport Road, intersecting Doddaballapur Road. It is set to cost Rs 3,348 crore with a three-year completion period fixed by BDA.

Land acquisition for the 73km corridor has been the main hurdle for the project to take off. A minimum of 80% of the total land has to be acquired in order to call for tenders. Going ahead with separate packages has made it easier for officials to bypass this hurdle, as about 83% of land in the first package has now been acquired. According to officials, this has the largest extent of govt land among the three packages.

Jagadeesh KH, deputy commissioner (additional land acquisition) at BDA, said over 20% of 576 acres required for package-1 is govt land, including central and state govts and forest land. "There are litigations, but since the project is included in the Revised Master Plan (RMP), the land has to be used for the road. There are around 900 landowners in this stretch, with most of them opting for cash compensation and 35:65 ratio of developed commercial sites along the corridor," he said.

BBC chairman LK Atheeq said the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) has already sanctioned a line of credit of Rs 27,000 crore for the project. "The detailed project report will be published before April 6. As the last date for receiving tenders is May 4, we will be able to issue work orders in about two and a half months from now," he said.

Atheeq also said the project has undergone several changes, like the addition of two clover-leaf junctions. "Apart from the one at Madavara, the package will have two more clover-leaf interchanges at Doddaballapur Road and Ballari Road (KIA Road). We have increased the length of the elevated stretch at Jarakbande Kaval and planned to have service roads on both sides instead of just one as per the earlier plan," he added.

File pic

GREEN COST: Over 20% of the 576 acres required for the first package of the project belongs to central and state govts. This includes forest land

Association chief takes exception

Meanwhile, PRR Farmers' and Landowners' Association president B Srinivasa termed the tender invitation by BDA contempt of court. "There are around 800 cases related to PRR pending in the high court. PRR was included in RMP as essential infrastructure. But in its current form, it is a commercial project rebranded Bengaluru Business Corridor. The main objective of the project is dead, and the project itself has lapsed," he said. Srinivasa said several farmers were forced into signing consent through local MLAs.

A total of 2,560 acres across 74 villages was notified in 2007 for PRR project. It has been pending since, as landowners have been demanding compensation under 2013 Land Acquisition Act. Guidance values of land in these villages have been frozen since 2016 to avoid cost escalation, but that has been a point of contention for farmers and landowners.

Missing family reunited after Delhi train journey separation

Times News Network

Bengaluru: After four days of uncertainty, complainant Sumit Kumar, who had posted about his wife, children and sister going missing on their train journey from Bengaluru to Delhi, has reunited with them.

Sumit, who is around 40 years old and a native of Panipat district in Haryana, Monday claimed on X that he had reunited with wife, Sushma, sister (yet to be identified), and two kids, Anaya and Pradyumn. However, he did not give details of how they went missing and how they were tracked.

The family boarded Karnataka Express at 7.20pm on March 25 (Wednesday) from KSR Bengaluru station.

After Sumit posted about his missing family Sunday, social media was flooded with reposts, reshares and amplification calls. The railway ministry and Railway Protection Force (RPF) were alerted too.

On Sunday night, Sumit uploaded one more post in which he said his family was last spotted in CCTV footage recovered from Karol Bagh Metro station in New Delhi.

TOI

Sushma with her children

When **TOI** contacted a relative of Sumit, who lives in Delhi, he claimed Sumit had travelled with his family on the train to the national capital. "Actually, such small things happen; he got upset over a minor argument. It wasn't (anything big). His wife doesn't have a phone; there is only one phone in the house," the relative said.

"An argument could have happened on the train itself, and because of that, he must have left quickly from there and got separated from the rest of his family. We started searching at the railway station itself; there was no one at home, it was locked. So, he (Sumit) was worried where they could have gone," the relative added.

According to this relative, the family reunited in their Delhi home much before Sumit uploaded his second post confirming their presence at the Metro station.

Unaware of the events, RPF officers said Sumit wasn't answering their calls and raised doubts due to inconsistency of information they'd received on X.

Shreyans Chinchawade, senior divisional safety commissioner, said: "There has been a lot of confusion in this case. For any distressed situation, calls for help should be raised through official social media handles of police or the agency concerned for better authentication. It will also help in inter-agency coordination. For any issues related to railways, it is encouraged to use 139 helplines."

Case against online post on minister

Bengaluru: Cybercrime police registered a suo motu case against an X account holder for posting "derogatory" comments on state home minister G Parameshwara after a Sri Siddhartha College professor allegedly proposed to a student in the classroom.

While monitoring social media platforms on March 27, police found the post from the handle 'sabhyastha'. A video clip from a regional news channel about the professor allegedly proposing to the student was uploaded with a caption referring to the home minister and a religion.

Police said the content, deemed derogatory, appeared to have been shared with the intention to incite hatred and hurt the religious sentiments of sections of society. The post was widely shared. TNN

Tenant-landlord feud over rent turns violent

Times News Network

Bengaluru: What began as a search for a better life in the city turned into a violent confrontation for a family from Uttar Pradesh after a dispute with their landlord, allegedly over rent, escalated into a clash in east Bengaluru.

The incident took place on March 29 in Kodihalli, JB Nagar. According to police, Naresh, Sachin and their sister Rekha rented a one-room kitchen in a building owned by Shobha and Devaraj. The rent was initially agreed at Rs 8,000, and the family moved in on March 24.

AI

However, within a week, tensions rose between them. The house owners reportedly demanded an increased rent of Rs 10,000, citing higher gas and water charges, and asked the tenants to vacate if they failed to comply. The tenants, on the other hand, requested at least 15 days to make alternative arrangements.

Household items like spoons, ladles and even a knife were reportedly used in the clash, leaving members of the tenant's family with injuries on their face and hands

The disagreement soon escalated into a heated argument and turned violent. Both sides allegedly assaulted each other, with Shobha and Rekha reportedly pulling each other's hair and engaging in a fight.

The house owners, however, presented a different account. They alleged the tenants failed to provide Aadhaar details and did not complete a rental agreement even after a week, raising suspicion. When asked to vacate, the tenants allegedly created a ruckus and attacked them.

During the clash, household items such as spoons, ladles and even a knife were reportedly used, leaving members of the tenant family with injuries on their face, hands and other parts of the body.

Police said a complaint and counter-complaint have been registered at JB Nagar police station.

Intervention in B'luru minimal: DKS

▶ Continued from page 1

Responding to demands from some legislators for a higher quota, Shivakumar said it was not feasible.

He further said in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata, nearly 50-60% of tickets are distributed among govt officials and related entities. "Compared to them, our intervention is minimal," the minister noted.

Earlier, Congress legislator Vijayanand Kashappanavar had demanded four tickets for each MLA to watch IPL matches in Bengaluru. His statement that legislators could not be queuing up like normal people, triggered a backlash on social media, with fans questioning "VIP culture".

On demands for a dedicated gallery for legislators and ministers for IPL matches, Shivakumar ruled out any interference by the govt on that and left it to KSCA to decide.

The DCM also said discussions were held on increasing capacity by another 20,000 seats at Chinnaswamy Stadium, which can currently hold 38,000 spectators.

He said talks were also on with civic authorities to identify land for new stadium projects, and a formal proposal would be sent to the govt for approval.

He added the state govt has already allotted around 25 acres of land to KSCA in Tumakuru and Mysuru. Additionally, cabinet approval has been granted for a new multi-discipline stadium at Suryanagar in Bengaluru through the Karnataka Housing Board.

Biker crashes into truck's trolley, dies

Bengaluru: Anil Gowda, 24, died after his bike crashed into a truck carrying a pumping machine on its trolley on Ballari Road elevated expressway in Byatarayanapura around 6.15am Monday.

Gowda, who was allegedly speeding, failed to notice the Eicher truck and crashed into the trolley from the rear. He was severely injured and died on the spot. In another accident, auto driver Rajesh, 40, died after his vehicle overturned while trying to avoid colliding with a two-wheeler. His friend Devaraju, 45, sustained injuries. TNN

Cold below surface: Shops lie vacant at Vijayanagar's underground A/C market

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Bengaluru: The Krishnadevaraya Palike Bazaar, near Vijayanagar Metro station, often described as south India's first underground air-conditioned market, presents a stark contrast to the bustling street above.

Completed at a cost of Rs 13 crore and inaugurated in Aug 2024, the facility now comes under Bengaluru West City Corporation after the formation of Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

Despite being showcased in official budget documents, the market remains largely deserted. Of the 79 shops in the complex, only five are occupied, with negligible customer footfall. Even the five vendors have shops on the street above and use the bazaar as an additional space.

Many vendors allotted shops inside continue to operate on the pavement above.

TOI

Shops at Palike Bazaar have largely remained unoccupied since 2024

"We were allotted shops inside, but there is no business there. We tried for over a year but failed," said Ramanna, a coconut seller, who returned to the street after Nov.

Karthik K, who sells puja items, runs a shop inside. But he also has a stall outside. "Once all street vendors are cleared, people will have to come down. Then business may improve," he said. Nearly 50 long-time vendors, many part of Vijayanagar Fruit and Vegetable Vendors' Association, were prioritised for allotment.

However, eviction of vendors from the street has hit a hurdle, with a group of them securing a stay order from the court. Until the issue is resolved, traders say, the underground market will struggle to attract customers.

The infrastructure inside remains underused. The market has a lift and two escalators, but these are often kept switched off to save power. "There are only five of us. Running them would be a waste," said Krishnamurthy, a flower seller. Another vendor also noted that a nearby transformer was once damaged due to the load from the escalators and lift.

Some traders have already changed businesses to cope with losses. Naseer Ahmed, who earlier sold fruits, now deals in garments and plastic goods. "Even now, business is almost nil," he said.

Officials, however, remain optimistic. Bengaluru West City Corporation Commissioner, KV Rajendra, said, "We are working to resolve the issues within the next two months. The market is ready for tender and auction, and we are in the process of fixing rents in the prescribed format, taking various cost factors into account."

Squabble in BJP threatens to cloud its prospects in Bagalkot segment

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ANI, IANS

CAMPAIGN MODE: CM Siddaramaiah gets a rousing reception during a roadshow in Manahalli, Bagalkot, on Monday. (Right) BJP state president BY Vijayendra addressing party workers in Davanagere South

Bengaluru: A raging factional feud is threatening to derail BJP's plans of an upset in the Bagalkot assembly bypoll, even as the contest is shaping into a direct face-off between chief minister Siddaramaiah and BJP state president BY Vijayendra.

With both taking charge of their respective campaigns, the byelection has turned into a high-stakes political battle. The constituency's caste arithmetic has added significance to the contest, with Lingayats forming nearly 30% of the 2.2 lakh electorate and Kurubas accounting for around 35,000 votes. While BJP is banking on its Lingayat base, Congress is relying on the Ahinda vote bloc, traditionally seen as loyal to Siddaramaiah.

DANCE OF DEMOCRACY

Both Siddaramaiah and Vijayendra campaigned simultaneously in the constituency Monday. "This contest has witnessed the emergence of Vijayendra as he is taking on Siddaramaiah. His stature will grow if we win," said P Rajiv, BJP state general secretary.

But internal divisions continue to cast a shadow on BJP's prospects. A rival camp within the party remains active, while signs of rebellion on the ground have added to the challenge. BJP candidate Veeranna Charanthimath faces a peculiar situation as his brother, Mallikarjun Charanthimath, is campaigning for Congress. Mallikarjun had contested against Veeranna in the 2023 assembly polls, a split that contributed to Veeranna's defeat to Congress' HY Meti.

"We are aware of the strategy and conspiracy being hatched by Congress but it will not work as support for BJP is swelling by the day," Vijayendra said during a padayatra. "There is growing enthusiasm among our workers who are campaigning from early in the morning."

However, adding to the pressure, a section of BJP functionaries, including former minister B Sreeramulu, has urged BJP brass to involve MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal in the campaign. Yatnal, a strident critic of Vijayendra and his father BS Yediyurappa, was expelled from BJP last year after publicly attacking party brass.

Former minister Aravind Limbavali, also seen as part of the rival camp, arrived in Bagalkot and is set to campaign separately. "Issues in the party remain and national brass will address them at an appropriate time. Now, the focus is on winning this seat," Limbavali said.

Despite the undercurrents, Vijayendra struck a confident note, welcoming Yatnal's involvement. "Our candidate Veeranna is a friend of all. Even functionaries from Congress are willing to campaign for him. We welcome anyone who is willing to work for his victory," he said.

CM, VIJAYENDRA TRADE BARBS

Bagalkot saw intense campaigning Monday as governing Congress and opposition BJP stepped up efforts ahead of the April 9 bypoll. Chief minister Siddaramaiah campaigned for Congress candidate Umesh Meti, recalling his father's work and highlighting the govt's guarantees. "Congress supports BPL families through the five guarantees, giving them Rs 5,000 to Rs 6,000 a month," he said, while accusing BJP of a lack of development between 2019 and 2023. On the Almatti dam issue, he said, "Even after 13 years, the Centre has not issued a gazette notification... we met central ministers several times but to no avail." Meanwhile, state party president BY Vijayendra was confident BJP candidate Veeranna Charantimath would win. "No tactics or conspiracies of Congress will work," he said. TNN

Child safety measures at tourist spots

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Bengaluru: The govt has directed officials to strictly implement child safety norms in the state's tourism policy to ensure safety at tourist destinations.

The commission's recommendations include displaying the child helpline number 1098 at all tourist sites, installing signboards marking danger zones for children, and training tourist guides, lifeguards and forest staff on the Juvenile Justice Act and the POCSO Act. Authorities have also been asked to create separate swimming or play areas for children at beaches and waterfalls.

Child rights activist Nagasimha G Rao welcomed the directive and revealed incidents like drowning, children getting lost or abused continue to be reported. "Children are often unaware of risks while travelling and depend entirely on adults for safety," he said. "It is the responsibility of both the govt and society to ensure safe environments. Every child deserves to feel secure even when travelling or at leisure."

As part of rules, district authorities have been asked to deploy child safety response teams at major tourist locations, including beaches. The tourism department has also mandated trained women staff at water parks and called for designated play areas for children at beaches and waterfalls.

Sources say the move follows recommendations made by Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) in Feb.

Tippeswamy KT, former KSCPCR member, said: "I had submitted the recommendations through the panel. It is a serious issue and that the govt has asked officials to take action is a significant step."

Transport cess corpus at ₹140cr, but relief lags

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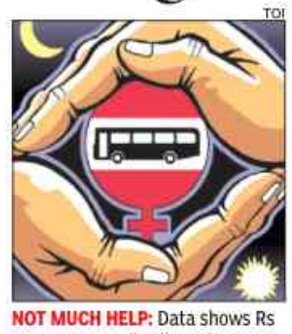

TOI

NOT MUCH HELP: Data shows Rs 8.7 crore was distributed to 175 families, but the number of deaths stood at 389

Bengaluru: The govt's motor transport and allied workers welfare board, established in late 2024 to provide social security to drivers, cleaners and allied workers in the sector, is facing criticism over delays in compensation payouts.

The labour department has collected some Rs 140 crore, but it has disbursed compensation to only 45% eligible families. Data shows 55% of families entitled to payouts — following deaths due to accidents, heart attacks, or natural causes — are yet to receive compensation.

Data shows Rs 8.7 crore was distributed to 175 accident victims' families, each receiving Rs 5 lakh. But the number of deaths recorded under the welfare board in the 2025–26 fiscal stands at 389, including 380 commercial vehicle drivers, two cleaners, and seven mechanics.

Of these deaths, 302 were due to accidents, 10 due to heart attacks, and 77 from natural causes. While relief was provided to 175 accident victims' families, only two of the 87 cases involving heart attacks and natural causes received payouts.

Officials attributed the delays to procedural hurdles involving the finance department. They say the labour department has been asked to submit an "action plan" for expenditure approvals which has led to frustration within the department.

"How can you provide an action plan for accident victims' compensation?" an official said. "We have been ridiculed by transport workers unions who say the purpose of setting up the welfare board has been defeated."

Labour minister Santosh Lad insisted there was no shortage of funds and that disbursements are being made as cases are processed. "There may be some technical delays, but those eligible are being paid," he said.

S Ravikumar, joint commissioner, labour department, said Rs 15 crore was allocated to address pending claims. He said verification procedures are currently underway. "Identifying next of kin and ensuring the money goes to them is a slightly long-drawn process," he said.

Educational assistance

Besides compensation, the department has provided educational assistance of Rs 10,000 per year to 294 children. It has also proposed an additional Rs 50 crore allocation to the finance department for other welfare schemes, including medical reimbursements and hospitalisation claims.

Shettar's assembly feat: Most deleted remarks were his

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Bengaluru: Chief minister Siddaramaiah and former CM **Jagadish Shettar** of BJP had the highest number of remarks expunged from the assembly record over the past five terms, official records show.

Data from 2008 to 2023 shows Shettar, now an MP, had 23 instances where words were struck off while Siddaramaiah, who served as CM and opposition leader previously, had 12. They are followed by former speaker KG Bopaiah (7) and KM Shivalingegowda of Congress.

During the joint session in Jan, BJP's Sunil Kumar referred to a document listing deletions from the proceedings. Shivalingegowda again drew attention in Feb for remarks that disrupted the session.

A senior assembly secretariat official said there is "no strict definition" of what should be struck off the record. "Whether a remark is expunged depends on the words used and the context," the official said. "For instance, if a legislator's name is mentioned in a positive context, no one asks for it to be expunged. But if it is used negatively, members raise objections. Sometimes, the unedited proceedings are not uploaded till the remarks are removed."

Deletions were in focus last week, when deputy CM DK Shivakumar and Munirathna of BJP exchanged expletives. They were later expunged from the record by speaker UT Khader, who called it "a black day" in the history of the assembly.

The highest number of deletions occurred between 2013 and 2018, largely during the Siddaramaiah-led Congress govt, when 118 instances were recorded. This marked a 257% increase from 33 cases between 2008 and 2012, followed by a 79% decline to 25 instances in 2018–23. During the 2013–18 term, Shettar, then opposition leader, had remarks expunged 22 times, while Siddaramaiah featured nine times.

There was a spike in 2015, with references to national figures Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi, along with allegations against them, removed. In 2016, references to "tampering of evidence" were expunged, while 2018 saw repeated use of the term "rowdy" struck off.

Between 2008-12, HC Balakrishna then with BJP and Congress' Mallikarjun Kharge led with three and two instances. In 2019–23, Congress' UT Khader and Shivalingegowda featured most often.

Third-language key for nation-building, says BJP

Opposition BJP again flayed the govt's decision not to award marks for the third language including Hindi in SSLC Class 10 results, calling it an "anti-Hindi" move and against "nation building".

"A connecting language is essential. There is no need to oppose Hindi," said CN Ashwath Narayan, MLA. "The third language can be any Indian language." He accused the govt of taking a "politically motivated decision". He said a three-language policy had existed before Independence, and a shift to a two-language approach lacked justification. Hundreds of Hindi teachers gathered at legislative council chairman **Basavaraj Horatti's** residence Monday and protested the govt's decision. Horatti is said to have called CM Siddaramaiah on the phone and urged him to withdraw the grading system. "Psychology advocates multi-language learning and Hindi enhances job prospects," said Horatti. "If the grading system is implemented, 15,000 Hindi teachers will lose their jobs." Meanwhile, Siddaramaiah clarified the govt wasn't against anyone learning Hindi and that his govt has not decided to adopt a two-language policy. TNN

Internal quota for Scheduled Castes still caught between justice and politics four decades on

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Bengaluru: A long-pending plan to introduce internal reservation within Scheduled Castes (SC) quota remains stalled for over four decades, with successive govts wary of backlash from competing SC 'Left' and 'Right' groups.

The demand, going back to the 1980s, has largely come from SC 'Left' communities, including Madigas, who argue reservation benefits have accrued disproportionately to relatively advanced groups such as Holeyas, often called SC 'Right'. Implementation has been repeatedly delayed on legal and political grounds.

M Gurumurthy, Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (DSS) state convener said, "Despite many surveys and studies, no govt has shown the will to implement reservation, though all have made tall promises."

The issue resurfaced after a special cabinet meeting last week was deferred to April due to the model code of conduct for April 9 bypolls. The agenda was to divide the previous 15% SC quota among 101 subcastes to ensure equitable access to jobs and education.

TOI

STRIPPED OF BENEFITS? File picture of members of nomadic communities protesting the govt's internal reservation matrix in Bengaluru. The govt had merged their exclusive 1% quota with the 5% of other communities

The demand gained momentum during SM Krishna's (1999–2004) tenure as chief minister, with organisations such as the DSS pressing for proportional allocation. In 2005, the Cong-JD(S) govt led by Dharam Singh constituted the AJ Sadashiva Commission. Its 2012 report, submitted during the tenure of BJP chief minister DV Sadananda Gowda, assessed disparities among SC subcastes but was not implemented.

The BJP govt led by Basavaraj Bommai attempted to take implementation forward ahead of the 2023 assembly polls, by increasing reservation to 17%. This took overall reservation above the Supreme Court cap of 50% and cases were filed in courts.

When the Supreme Court upheld states' power to create sub-categories within the SC quota in Aug 2024, the current govt examined fresh data, including inputs from the Justice Nagamohan Das Commission. A tentative formula proposed splitting the 17% quota into three parts — 6% each for two major groups and 5% for others — but this triggered divisions within communities and the cabinet.

The govt attempted to give the matrix legal backing by passing The Karnataka Scheduled Castes (Sub-classification) Bill, 2025, but the high court stayed its implementation in recruitment in Oct 2025.

Concerns over exclusion

Protests have intensified, with smaller and nomadic SC groups raising concerns over exclusion. Jagadguru Immadi Siddarameshwara Swami of the Bhovi Gurupeeta said several communities risk being sidelined and called for an expert panel representing all 101 sub-castes. Representatives have also flagged the roster system in govt hiring, warning that post-wise allocation could result in all vacancies in a cycle going to a single sub-category.

In Feb, the govt decided to fill over 56,000 posts and issued an order to follow the earlier SC quota (15%) framework pending judicial clarity, but this drew protests from SC 'Left' groups. Demonstrations in Dharwad and a recent one in Kalaburagi by unemployed youths have added to the pressure.

"Any move is likely to trigger a backlash from one side or the other, which could impact the 2028 assembly polls," said Vishwas Shetty, political commentator. "That is why decisions have been delayed."

SHORT TAKES

Panel pitches overhaul of state's civil services

Karnataka State Policy and Planning Commission member S Mohanadass Hegde submitted a proposal titled 'Karnataka Civil Services Reform Roadmap 2026-2036 – Sewa Karnataka' to CM Siddaramaiah, outlining measures to modernise the state's civil services. The roadmap proposes reforms in recruitment to assess practical skills and ethics, enhanced training with continuous learning and field exposure, and improved career management through fixed tenures and reduced arbitrary transfers. It also stresses accountability via citizen engagement and 360-degree feedback. Structural changes, including renaming services as Indian Public Service with domain specialisations, have been suggested.

Legislators should buy IPL tickets: DK Suresh

Former MP DK Suresh hit out at legislators for demanding free tickets to watch IPL matches, calling it "wrong". He said those keen on watching matches should buy tickets. "IPL is not a tournament which represents the nation; it is a commercial event. It is not good for public representatives to focus on these matters," said Suresh, also brother of deputy CM DK Shivakumar. He said the issue was "unnecessarily being politicised". "Even BJP MLAs received free tickets," he said.

Ensure Kannada is respected: VTU to colleges

Bengaluru: Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) issued a directive that all employees must take care to ensure Kannada, administrative language of the state, is not disrespected in colleges under its jurisdiction.

As per the March 24 circular, all principals and heads of colleges must take personal responsibility to ensure respect for the language and harmony are maintained in institutions. If any violation is found, disciplinary action will be taken against staff. No teaching or non-teaching staff should use derogatory or inappropriate words about Kannada while communicating with students or others, the circular said.

The move comes after Kannada Development Authority issued a letter to the university to ensure linguistic harmony. VTU VC Prof S Vidyashankar said: "VTU has 220 affiliated colleges with 3 lakh students, including students from different states and countries. We are ensuring Kannada is not disrespected. Since some unpleasant incidents occurred, we issued guidelines to prevent such situations."

The university faced a problem earlier when the warden of private engineering college hostel allegedly instructed students not to speak in Kannada. "If you want to speak in the language, do it at home," he said in a video that went viral.

Scholarships distributed

UVCE Graduates' Association hosted an award ceremony on March 28 as part of the scholarship programme that supported 72 students through various avenues. This year, scholarships amounting to Rs 14 lakh were distributed. TNN

Bear was translocated to Bhadra forest recently

▸ Continued from page 1

According to sources, the animal was recently translocated to Bhadra wildlife division after it was captured in Vijayanagara district. Officials, however, declined to confirm its origin.

As forest department personnel from Umblebailu and Lakkavalli ranges tried to track it, the bear reportedly leapt over the airport's perimeter wall and took refuge in dense vegetation along the compound's edge.

A veterinarian eventually tranquilised it in the presence of DCF (Bhadravathi division) BM Ravindra Kumar and Bhadra Tiger Reserve director Pulkit Meena.

5 trains get modern coaches for smooth travel

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Bengaluru: Gone are the days of the old iconic beige-and-brown coaches linked to some of the city's short-distance trains. South Western Railway (SWR) has converted five short-distance trains to modern Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) rakes, which hit the tracks recently.

Three Mysuru-bound trains, one to Dharwad, and the intercity express to Talaguppa, the nearest railway station to Jog Falls, have got new coaches for a more comfortable journey. LHB coaches are modern, stainless steel passenger coaches used by Indian Railways. The air-conditioned version of these coaches was initially imported from Germany for the Shatabdi Express trains, following which they were manufactured in India.

TOI

NEW & IMPROVED: LHB coaches have accessories like charging points & tray tables

Designed for speeds of up to 160-180 kmph, enhanced safety, and passenger comfort, these coaches have improved accessories like charging points, tray tables, and modular cabin switches. The air-conditioned LHB coaches have modular window blinds along with sliding window shutters instead of the old clip-based window shutters. However, modernisation has reduced the total number of coaches from 21 to 19. The current arrangement features 11 general coaches, five reserved second-sitting coaches, and an A/C chair car.

Passengers have, however, expressed concerns about the design of second-sitting coaches, which feature chairs with limited incline.

New Memu to Arsikere

Meanwhile, Union minister of state for railways V Somanna said a new Memu train between Bengaluru and Arsikere via Tumakuru has been approved.

"This train will benefit students, daily-wage workers, employees, farmers and traders. The service will improve connectivity, support the local economy and daily commuters," he said.

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TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2026

OMAR WANTS OPPOSITION TO SWEEP NEXT MONTH'S ASSEMBLY POLLS IN 4 STATES AND 1 UNION TERRITORY

DELHI CM REKHA GUPTA RELEASES ₹20 CRORE FOR COW WELFARE, 10 'MODERN' GAUSHALAS ENVISAGED

HACK OF THE DAY — **VERIFY SCHEMES AND FINANCIAL ENTITIES ON SACHET**

WHAT IT SOLVES: Helps you avoid fake deposit schemes, unauthorized lenders, and suspicious financial operators who promise high returns or instant loans

WHAT TO DO: Use the Sachet portal to check registered entities and report suspicious money-collection or deposit schemes

STEPS:

1. **Visit** https://sachet.rbi.org.in
2. **Search** for the company, scheme, or financial entity you want to verify
3. **Check** whether the entity appears in the regulator-linked records or warning information
4. **Review** complaint and information options if the scheme looks suspicious
5. **Report** the entity or offer if you suspect unauthorised deposit-taking or fraud

CAREFUL: Do not rely on registration claims in ads or WhatsApp messages alone. Many fake schemes use official-sounding names to appear legitimate

SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

UP man hosts own death ritual, cites loneliness

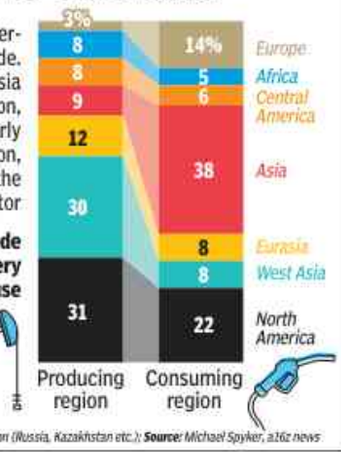
In a bizarre case, a 64-year-old man from Lakshmanpur village in UP's Auraiya district threw a curveball at tradition. Defying the conventional norm of holding 'terahvi' feasts posthumously, Rakesh Yadav decided to observe it while still alive, **reports Faiz Siddiqui.** The grand affair on Monday saw 1,900 guests, leaving everyone stunned. Yadav gave a twofold reason for the unusual move. He told locals he wanted to combat loneliness. More poignantly, he suspected his relatives might skip the ritual due to financial constraints. To spare them the trouble, he hosted the event himself. The formal invitation card read: "Invitation for a living 'terahvi'. I am alone, with no one for me. I am fortunate to hold my 'bhandara while alive'. Yadav said the event was merely a feast with no religious rites or 'pind daan'.

STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

Who produces oil, and who burns it?

There's a widening producer-consumer geographic divide. North America and West Asia dominate crude production, but Asia accounts for nearly 40% of global consumption, mainly through use in the transportation sector

Share (%) of global crude oil & consuption by refinery output & end use



*Eurasia includes former Soviet Union region (Russia, Kazakhstan etc.); **Source:** Michael Spyker, a16z news

Lucky bustard: 50 forest guards to watch a chick

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The personnel work in three shifts and relay updates on the chick (in circle) to officers in Gandhinagar

Ahmedabad: India's Z+ security cover, the highest tier with 55 personnel, is reserved for VVIPs whose safety is deemed a matter of national importance. In the grasslands of Abdasa in Kutch, this distinction now belongs to a great Indian bustard chick, hatched on March 26 — the first born in Gujarat's wild in nearly a decade.

Weighing barely 150gms, this 'Very Very Important Chick (VVIC)' has a mega-team of 50 forest guards watching over it day and night from specially erected watchtowers fitted with tripods, spotting scopes and binoculars.

The officials work in three shifts and relay minute-by-minute updates to officers in Gandhinagar. Feral dogs and cattle are kept at bay, village roads have been quietly shut, and damaged fencing is being repaired on a war footing. Even artificial waterholes have been left dry, lest they draw predators too close to the newborn. For one of the most critically endangered bird species on the planet, the birth itself is a landmark.

Officials say the hard part has only just begun. Hatching the egg required technical expertise.

Keeping the chick alive through its first month, until it takes its maiden flight, will demand faith, backed by huge manpower and extraordinary vigilance. The operation is being supervised by Wildlife Institute of India experts. A senior officer aid, "Almost the entire staff is involved in caring for this chick the way they would care for a baby in their own home. Every staff member is eager to help in ways they can."

Home voting process begins in Kerala, Assam and Puducherry

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

T'puram/Guwahati: The home-voting process began in Kerala, Assam and Puducherry, which go to polls on April 9, with nearly 2.38 lakh electors in the two states and the UT approved for the facility so far by the returning officers (ROs). The optional facility of home voting is provided for elderly voters above 85 years of age and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

In Kerala, a total of 1,45,592 senior citizens and 62,220 PwDs have registered for home voting, while the number of elderly and PwD voters in Assam is 19,774 and 6,638, respectively. Puducherry has 2,066 elderly voters and 1,621 electors with disabilities.

In Kerala, polling teams have begun visiting voters who opted for the facility, and the process will continue till April 4. Ballot papers are being used for home voting.

Assam's joint chief electoral officer Sanjib Phukan said, "A team of polling officials will visit the electors' homes to collect their votes, and a second visit will be undertaken if the voter is not available on the first visit."

Cong's Assam candidate Chettri injured in attack, BJP denies role

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Guwahati: Congress candidate Sunil Kumar Chettri from Naduar constituency in Assam's Sonitpur district was critically injured after being attacked, allegedly by a gang of BJP supporters, Monday. BJP denied any involvement.

Sharing video footage, Congress claimed that a group of men attacked Chettri with bamboo sticks on a roadside. Chettri, senior Assam PCC spokesperson Rupa Kalita, and several Congress supporters injured in the assault were admitted to Tezpur MCH.

Assam PCC president Gaurav Gogoi demanded the immediate arrest of the perpetrators. BJP candidate and Chettri's main opponent, Padma Hazarika, called the accusations against party members baseless.

HC: State's duty to protect couples from 'honour' killing

Rajesh Kumar Pandey | TNN

Prayagraj: The state must protect adult couples marrying against the wishes of their families, Allahabad HC has said, asking Aligarh SSP to provide security to a couple who feared "honour killing" by the woman's family which filed against the man an alleged false of abduction for forced marriage.

Justices JJ Munir and Tarun Saxena, in Mar 25 order, directed authorities not to arrest the petitioners in connection with the criminal case till the court vacates the stay. They also ordered the woman's family, along with the husband's relatives, not to harm the petitioners, enter their house, or establish contact with them directly or through any electronic communication means.

In Kerala, Rahul accuses CPM of Sabari gold theft

Alleges PM Modi Sidestepped Sabarimala Issue To Shield CPM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

PTI

BALANCING ACT: Rahul Gandhi leaves on a bicycle after attending a public gathering, ahead of Kerala assembly polls, in Kottayam Monday

Pathanamthitta/Kottayam: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi accused Kerala's governing CPM functionaries of stealing gold from Sabarimala temple and replacing it with brass, sharpening a high-voltage attack Monday that also cast BJP as complicit.

Opening a rally in Pathanamthitta with a parody refrain used by Congress-led UDF, Rahul asked: "Swarnam kattathu aarappa (Who stole the gold?)." He addressed meetings across Adoor, Pampady, Kanjikuzhy and Athirampuzha before April 9 assembly polls. Rahul repeated his claim that PM Narendra Modi is "compromised" by US president Donald Trump. "PM Modi controls CM Pinarayi Vijayan in the same way Trump controls Modi," he said.

He alleged Modi sidestepped the Sabarimala issue during his Kerala visit to shield CPM and prevent damage to BJP. "Left Front politicians have stolen Ayyappa's gold and replaced it with brass," Rahul alleged, promising a UDF govt would punish those responsible for irregularities.

Rahul claimed the LDF brass faced no scrutiny despite "known" corruption, contrasting it with his own questioning "for 55 hours" and "36 cases" for opposing BJP. "We are fighting an election against LDF, which is fully supported by BJP," he said, alleging both sides benefit from each other's presence.

EC shifts Bengal dy CEO as poll machinery reset stirs further row

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Kolkata: Election Commission transferred Monday state deputy chief electoral officer Subrata Pal to the health department with immediate effect, escalating a churn that has rattled political and bureaucratic circles in Bengal since March 15.

Pal is among the most senior officials moved in the ongoing shake-up. He had served with EC for seven years and handled logistics, media and advertising. No official reason was cited. But some senior EC officials have been expressing concern over the state administration's "penetration" in the commission for some time.

A 2005-batch West Bengal Civil Services (Executive) officer, Pal will join health and family welfare as senior deputy secretary. In a parallel move, health department additional secretary Rahul Nath was shifted into poll management as joint state CEO.

Three more senior officials were removed following a proposal from Bengal CEO Manoj Agarwal. Additional secretary Narendra Nath Dutta moved to labour, additional secretary Supriya Das to food processing industries and horticulture, and joint secretary Mithu Sarkar to minority affairs and madrasa education. The moves come as EC's large-scale reshuffle faces judicial scrutiny. Trinamool MP and senior advocate Kalyan Banerjee challenged the sweep before Calcutta high court, questioning legality and timing of a single-day transfer of 267 officials. The petition alleges the scale and pace of changes could impact neutrality of election administration. EC has not publicly responded to the claims.

BATTLEGROUND WEST BENGAL

TN CM owns no car; assets slump to ₹6.2cr

Chennai: Tamil Nadu CM and DMK chief **MK Stalin** filed nomination Monday from Kolathur, aiming for a fourth straight win from the working-class North Chennai seat, while projecting the sweeping mandate for the governing alliance.

Affidavit shows assets worth Rs 6.2 crore, down from Rs 7.1 crore declared in 2021. Movable assets stand at Rs 3.3 crore. Neither Stalin nor wife Durga Stalin own a car or two-wheeler.

After filing papers, Stalin rode through Kolathur in a red-and-black car, waving to crowds lining the route.

"I am witnessing unprecedented support in Kolathur this time. People here will give a resounding victory with a huge margin," he said, predicting DMK-led front would cross 200 seats in the 234-member assembly.

He framed the April 9 election as a fight with New Delhi over Tamil Nadu's rights. TNN

Vijay declares ₹640-cr assets

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IANS

TVK prez and actor Vijay addresses a crowd, in Chennai on Monday

Chennai: TVK president Vijay, launching his campaign in Perambur, Chennai, on Monday, urged voters to give him "one chance" in the 2026 elections.

Speaking shortly after filing his nomination and declaring assets worth about Rs 640 crore held by him and his spouse, Sangeetha, he said, "Give your Vijay — your brother, your son — one chance," he said, adding that the election was for an entire generation and marked the start of a "whistle revolution". "No matter how comfortable my life was, I have given it up only for you to repay my gratitude, bearing all the pain. I will never cheat you."

He said the contest this year was not multi-cornered and framed it as a fight between DMK and TVK. He criticised chief minister MK Stalin over what he described as rising crime and drug use.

He said the situation left people feeling unsafe, particularly women and children. "For five years, Stalin sir was in control of the police department. If basic safety cannot be ensured, what is the purpose of this govt and administration," Vijay said.

"Stalin sir does not care about safety or people's welfare. For him and DMK, looting for their families was the only priority over the past five years," he said, citing alleged irregularities in Tasmac operations and the cash-for-job scam linked to the municipal administration department.

"They are now going to give cash that they have looted. As I said earlier, take everything from them but whistle in their ears and send them back. Just as they deceived us smartly, we will send them out," Vijay said.

He cut short his speech at the next stop in Kolathur as the crowd swelled and cancelled a planned address in Villivakkam, citing inadequate police deployment and security arrangements, and concerns over public safety.

Vijay's poll affidavit shows Rs 404 crore in movable assets, including cash, investments, gold, and vehicles. The vehicles listed include a Toyota Lexus, Vellfire, BMW, Maruti Swift, and a TVS XL Super two-wheeler.

Bengal nawab's 346 descendants struck off rolls

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Kolkata: Descendants of a dynasty whose writ once ran across Bengal, Bihar and Odisha will now have to queue up before tribunals to re-establish their identity as genuine citizens. At least 346 descendants of Mir Jafar—commander-in-chief of Siraj-ud-Daulah's army who went on to become the nawab of Bengal with support from East India Company after the Battle of Plassey in 1757—have been struck off the electoral roll.

Voters of booth no. 121 in Lalbagh Nav Adarsh High School of Murshidabad assembly segment till 2025, their names were put 'under-adjudication' after the special intensive revision.

Syed Reza Ali Meerza, 82, popularly known as 'Chhote Nawab', said not only his name but those of nine members of his immediate family, including that of his son, a sitting municipal councillor, were deleted. The family argues that their Indian identity is beyond dispute.

Woman digs 40ft well, ends anxious 2-hour daily trek via forest for water

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TOI

For 60 days, Sakuntala Chatar (35) kept digging — three to four hours daily — till she reached 40-ft deep and finally found water

Bhubaneswar: Two years back, Sakuntala Chatar (35) would trek at least an hour inside Odisha's Chandaka-Dampada wildlife sanctuary negotiating the forests full of wild animals, particularly elephants, to fetch water that was not even fit for drinking.

The trek would be twice daily, at times even in the night. The tube wells where she lived—Kandelei Munda Sahi area in Chhatabar gram panchayat close to Bhubaneswar—were either defunct or did not give enough water. Tired, Sakuntala, a midday meal cook at the govt primary school, decided to dig a well in her own land. For 60 days she kept digging—three to four hours daily—till she reached 40-ft deep and finally found water. She got occasional help from her husband Laduram Chatar, a mason, and neighbour Jagannath Tingua, a labourer. That was in 2024.

"We were scared of going to the water body often because of elephants. That's why I decided to dig the well," said Sakuntala, who came from Chaturanjali village in Mayurbhanj district to the sanctuary some 16 years ago.

The well fulfils not only the family's water needs, but also that of four to five households in the neighbourhood. "Water from the well is clean compared to the one from small waterfalls in the forest," said her neighbour Asrita Chatar (30). Sarpanch Bishnu Prasad Denga said Sakuntala's hard work and determination made her family stand out in the village.

PM flags migrant influx into Assam as 'matter of life & death'

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Guwahati: Cross-border infiltration is "a matter of life and death" for Assam, PM Narendra Modi said Monday, urging BJP workers to not let voters forget how the influx of illegal immigrants on Congress's watch for decades continues to bear down on the state. "Congress's legacy of encroachment and unrest should be explained to the new generation. The crises arising from this has to be explained, too," Modi told workers at the Mera Booth, Sabse Mazboot Samvaad programme over the NaMo app.

BJP said five lakh-odd party workers assembled at over 4,500 shakti kendras to hear the PM speak.

Modi said illegal infiltration "permitted" by Congress spared none – from places of worship and indigenous culture to community land and livelihoods. He asked BJP cadres to gather "complete information" about encroachments in blocks and districts and explain their impact to the public in detail. "What impact has it had over the past decades? People should be told. You can share videos of victims in your area. We must tell people that Congress patronised encroachment while BJP is reclaiming people's rights. I firmly believe people of Assam want freedom from encroachment."

Artefacts taken during Op Blue Star: HC issues notice to Centre, others

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chandigarh: Punjab and Haryana High Court (HC) Monday issued notices to the Army, CBI and central govt on a plea seeking directions to disclose the whereabouts of the manuscripts, religious books, and other articles that were allegedly seized during Operation Blue Star and handed over to Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) by the Army and CBI.

A division bench headed by chief justice Sheel Nagu issued the notices after hearing a PIL filed in 2019 by Ludhiana resident Satinder Singh.

As per the petition, the Army had "seized" these articles from the Sikh Reference Library, Toshakhana, Central Sikh Museum and Guru Ramdas Library in Golden Temple complex during the 1984 operation.

As per the petition, the Army had 'seized' these articles from the Sikh Reference Library, Toshakhana, Central Sikh Museum and Guru Ramdas Library in Golden Temple complex during the 1984 operation

The petitioner described himself as a devout Sikh with deep sentimental attachment to articles/artefacts/manuscripts connected with Sikh history, and expressed concern about "misappropriation of manuscripts, religious books and other articles handed over to SGPC by Army, CBI and govt and duly received by SGPC".

The petition claimed that the home ministry, in a petition filed on a similar issue in 2004, had informed that all the valuables, artefacts and manuscripts of historical significance recovered from Golden Temple Complex were returned to SGPC and officials of Punjab govt.

As per information, 52 historical and 43 non-historical items were handed over to SGPC, state authorities. Historical items included paintings of Central Sikh Museum, handed over to Punjab Govt Museum curator Mohan Singh on Sept 13, 1984. Petitioner sought directions to prepare lists of artefacts, manuscripts, and literature removed by the Army on June 7, 1984, and of those returned to SGPC.

Burqa-clad Hindu woman detained, let off by court

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Varanasi: A 22-year-old burqa-clad Hindu woman was detained along with a Muslim youth at the Varanasi airport Sunday evening.

The woman was to board a Mumbai flight with the youth. When the documents were being checked before issuance of boarding passes, airline officials grew suspicious when they saw her in burqa while her Aadhaar identified her as a Hindu. After initial questioning, the CISF handed her and the youth accompanying her to police.

During investigation, it came to light that the woman, from Bihar's Gopalganj, lives in Mumbai with her family. She fell in love with a Muslim youth in Mumbai. When her father came to know about it, he brought the girl from Mumbai to Gopalganj to marry her off to a youth of their caste. However, the woman informed her lover about her family's decision, after which he sent flight tickets and asked her to reach Mumbai with his friend.

On Sunday, both reached the Varanasi airport.

Phulpur police station in-charge Atul Singh on Monday said credentials of the woman and the youth accompanying her were verified and no criminal record was found.

She was produced before a magistrate where she recorded her statement. The woman reiterated she was going to Mumbai as he wanted to marry her lover. Since she is an adult, the magistrate allowed her to go.

Radio-collared tiger killed as it brought its trackers close to illegal opium field

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Officers found 6,148 opium plants from a farm inside the forest

Bhopal: An apex predator's path crossed a secret. The secret killed it.

A rewilded, radio-collared tiger roaming Chhindwara's forests was poisoned not out of vengeance but to protect an illegal opium crop — a chilling twist that has bared a narcotics trail deep inside Madhya Pradesh's big cat country.

The four-and-a-half-year-old male had been translocated from Bandhavgarh to Satpura tiger reserve in Dec 2024 and fitted with a satellite collar on Jan 1, 2025. A programmed drop-off system allowed continuous monitoring without recapture. Signals went dark on March 3.

Officials initially suspected satellite interference tied to the US-Israel-Iran conflict. Drop-off command came only on March 19. Patrol teams fanned out. First came a carcass — a bull. Then, deeper in forest scrub, the striped monarch lay dead. Officers said frequent patrols tracking the tiger's collar brought officials dangerously close to an opium plantation. Pressure mounted. The tiger became a liability.

Early theory signalled retaliation. A villager angered by livestock loss had poisoned the kill. Probe peeled back a darker layer. The bull carcass used as bait had its tagged ears severed — a calculated move to erase ownership. The tiger ate poisoned flesh. The collar — worth over Rs 6 lakh — was burned. The tiger carcass buried in a pit roughly 200m away. The trail led to a villager in Sangakheda range. He allegedly confessed to lacing the carcass after the tiger killed his cattle. Investigators said the motive ran deeper. The tiger's movement drew forest teams close to a opium field — a risk operators could not afford. Search of the site yielded 6,148 opium plants. Three more were arrested.

Energy imports from Africa on the rise as India diversifies

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New Delhi: The availability of crude, LPG and LNG in India has improved considerably compared to a month ago when the West Asia conflict broke out, a petroleum ministry official said Monday. Officials said India has diversified sourcing of crude and gas to plug gaps caused by disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, while prioritising LPG and LNG supplies to ensure retail consumers and critical sectors remain unaffected. "The availability of energy has certainly improved and we are in a much better position than a month ago," said Sujata Sharma, joint secretary, petroleum ministry.

India imports 5.5-5.6 million barrels of crude daily; before the conflict, 40-45% came via the Strait. For LPG, India meets about 60% of its 31 million tonne annual demand through imports, 90% routed through the Strait. Natural gas consumption stands at 191 mmscmd, with 51% imported, about 60% from West Asia.

Another official said that India is tapping the US, Russia, Canada, Norway and West African nations like Nigeria, Algeria and Angola for LPG, and countries such as Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique for LNG. Cargoes have already been purchased from some sources, while talks are at an advanced stage with others. Officials said imports from Africa are steadily rising, even as West Asia remains dominant. India has diversified crude sourcing from 27 to 41 countries in a decade, reducing dependence on the Strait from 45% to about 30%.

Indian killed in Kuwait plant attack

New Delhi: An Indian national was killed in an attack on a power and water desalination plant in Kuwait, taking the toll of Indians killed in the ongoing war in West Asia to eight.

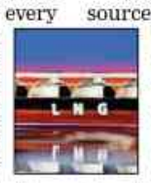
"Embassy of India in Kuwait expresses its condolences at the tragic demise of an Indian national due to an attack on a desalination facility in Kuwait yesterday. The embassy is coordinating with Kuwaiti authorities to render all possible support and assistance," said the Indian embassy on X, confirming the first Indian death in Kuwait in the conflict.

Kuwait's ministry of electricity, water and renewable energy said a service building at one of its power and water distillation plants was damaged during the attack. TNN

Spot buying of LNG to help ramp up urea output

Dipak.Dash@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Domestic urea manufacturing has been hit due to the West Asia crisis, with production falling to 18 lakh tonnes this month from the earlier average of 24 lakh tonnes. But the output is set to increase with greater availability of LNG, procured through "spot buying" every fortnight, officials have said.Govt has said there is adequate stock of fertilisers, and it's tapping alternative sources to boost supplies even as the urea units which had taken annual maintenance shutdown this month are resuming production.



Centre has also asked states to monitor any abnormal spike in sales of fertilisers in the current "lean season" to prevent any stockpiling and black marketing, people aware of the development said. They said any such activity would attract stringent action, while adding that farmers need not panic as availability of soil nutrients is adequate and these will be available at current prices. Briefing mediapersons on Monday, Aparna Sharma, additional secretary in fertilisers department, said the current stock of soil nutrients at 180 lakh tonnes is 22% higher than that last year.

On diversification of sources, she said a global tender for 13.1 lakh tonnes of urea has been floated and long-term arrangements have been tied up with countries such as Saudi Arabia and Oman. In addition, the focus is on sourcing from other countries, including Russia, Morocco, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Jordan, Canada, Algeria and Egypt.

On the impact of the conflict on fertiliser sector, Sharma said the Gulf region accounted for about 20-30% of India's urea imports, 30% of Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) and 50% of LNG needs.

10 India-bound ships carrying energy cargo stuck in Persian Gulf

Dipak.Dash
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Govt Monday said that 10 foreign-flagged ships carrying energy products and bound for India are presently stranded in the Persian Gulf. This is in addition to 18 Indian vessels that are currently in that region.

Responding to a question, Rajesh Sinha, special secretary of shipping ministry, said three of the foreign-flagged ships are loaded with LPG, four are carrying crude oil and three are loaded with LNG. Govt's priority is to ensure that Indian-flagged vessels carrying India-bound cargo are allowed to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, he stressed. Two LPG carriers, carrying approx 94,000 tonnes of cooking gas, cleared Strait of Hormuz on Saturday and are likely to dock at Mumbai Port and New Mangalore Port in the next two days.

In response to a question over how many empty vessels are likely to be sent back to the Persian Gulf for fresh loading, Sinha said, "We are yet to reach the stage where we start sending them (Indian-flagged vessels) back."

He also pointed out that insurance premiums have risen. "The affected area is not just the Strait of Hormuz; areas outside of it also fall under the high-risk area (HRA)." He added that commercial premiums used to be 0.04% of the insured value before the war but have since gone up.

India sends diesel to Bangladesh

Bangladesh is receiving a fresh consignment of 7,000 tonnes of diesel through a pipeline from India's Numaligarh refinery, with energy minister Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku Monday telling Parliament that fuel hoarding — not a supply shortage amid the West Asia crisis — is the bigger concern, reports **Ahsan Tasnim**.

Government of India
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India)
Project Implementation Unit – Bengaluru
Survey No. 13, 14th Km, Nagasandra, Bengaluru-Tumkur Road (NH-4), Bengaluru -560073

PUBLIC NOTICE

1. In provisions of National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008 and Amended Rules, 2011 and as per the official Notification S.O. 219 (E) published in the Gazette of India, on 22.01.2013, the rates for collection of user fee at plaza of Four- laning of Mulbagal-AP/ Karnataka Border section of NH-75 (Old NH-4) from Km. 216.912 to Km. 239.100 in the State of Karnataka are revised as under and effective from 00.00 Hrs of 01.04.2026. Amount in Rs.

AT GADDURU TOLL PLAZA

Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journeys in a month	Fee for commercial vehicle registered within the district of plaza
Car/Jeep/Van/LMV	35	50	1120	15
LCV/LGV/Mini Bus	55	80	1805	25
Truck/Bus (2 Axle)	115	170	3785	55
3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	125	185	4125	60
Heavy Construction Machinery/Earth Moving Equipment or Multi Axle Vehicle (MAV) (4-6 Axles)	180	265	5935	90
Oversized vehicles (7 or more axle)	215	325	7220	110

NOTE:
1. The rate for monthly pass for local personal traffic is Rs. 350 (Three Hundred fifty Rupees) for the year 2026-2027 for Car/Jeep/Van/LMV.
2. The rate of Annual pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs. 3,075/-.
3. The fee rates mentioned above in the table and the amount of monthly pass for the local personal traffic are subject to annual revision from 1st April every year on the basis of the provisions of the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008 & its amendments.

Sd/-
(K.B Jayakumar)
Project Director
PIU-Bengaluru

DELHI GMR
Delhi International Airport Limited
Registered Office: New Udaan Bhawan, Opp. Terminal 3, Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi - 110 037
CIN NO. U63033DL2006PLC146936

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

Delhi International Airport Ltd. (DIAL) invites tender/bids for **"Appointment of Training Agency for undertaking Technical Trainings related to Aviation Sector"**. For details, the interested parties may download the Bid Documents from **www.newdelhiairport.in** 31.03.26 onwards. The last date for submission of the Bids is 15.04.26.

DIAL/235/PREM ASSOCIATES

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Publication of Tender Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/178/2026 Dated:25-03-2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Sl.	Item of Work	Approx. Value	Date of Closing
1	Site clearance and tree cutting & Transportation, land boundary marking & installing pillars; land acquisition liasoning and mutation for Shivamogga Town-Ranibennur New line project from KM 48/000 to 103/175 **(Tender Ref. No. : SMET-RNR-SITE-CLEARANCE)**	Rs. 13,86,22,502/-	17-04-2026 (15:00 Hrs.)
2	Design, Customization, Implementation, Operations & Maintenance support of Integrated Project Management and information system (PMIS) for various projects under South Western Railway. **(Tender Ref. No. : PMIS-SWR-01R)**	Rs. 4,26,03,321/-	24-04-2026 (15:00 Hrs.)

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

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Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction/Works
Bengaluru Cantonment

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Government of India
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India)
Project Implementation Unit – Bengaluru
Survey No. 13, 14th Km, Nagasandra, Bengaluru-Tumkur Road (NH-4), Bengaluru -560073

PUBLIC NOTICE

1. In provisions of National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008 and Amended Rules, 2011 and as per the official Notification S.O. 2089 (E) published in the Gazette of India, on 26.08.2010, the rates for collection of user fee at plaza of Access Controlled Highway of Bengaluru Nelamangala Section of NH48 from Km. 10.000 to Km.29.500 in the State of Karnataka are revised as under and effective from 00.00 Hrs of 01.04.2026. Amount in Rs.

At Bangalore-Nelmangala

Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journeys in a month
TP-1 at Km 14+825(LHS) and TP-6 @26+050(RHS)			
Car/Jeep/Van/LMV	35	50	1145
LCV/LGV/Mini Bus	55	85	1845
Truck/Bus (2 Axle)	115	175	3870
3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	125	190	4220
Heavy Construction Machinery/ Earth Moving Equipment or Multi Axle Vehicle (MAV) (4-6 Axles)	180	275	6070
Oversized vehicles (7 or more axle)	220	330	7390

2.

Sl. No.	Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journeys in a month
TP-2 at Km 16+600 (RHS)				
01	Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	10	15	330
02	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	15	25	535
03	Truck / Bus (2 Axle)	35	50	1125
04	3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	35	55	1230
05	Heavy Construction Machinery / Earth Moving Equipment or MAV (4-6 Axles)	55	80	1765
06	Oversized Vehicles (7 or more axles)	65	95	2150

3.

Sl No.	Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journeys in a month
TP-3 at Km 17+375 (LHS)				
01	Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	25	35	770
02	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	35	55	1245
03	Truck / Bus (2 Axle)	80	120	2610
04	3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	85	130	2850
05	Heavy Construction Machinery / Earth Moving Equipment or MAV (4-6 Axles)	125	185	4095
06	Oversized Vehicles (7 or more axles)	150	225	4985

4.

Sl No.	Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journeys in a month
TP-4 at Km 23+150 (LHS)				
01	Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	15	20	480
02	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	25	35	775
03	Truck / Bus (2 Axle)	50	75	1630
04	3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	55	80	1775
05	Heavy Construction Machinery / Earth Moving Equipment or MAV (4-6 Axles)	75	115	2555
06	Oversized Vehicles (7 or more axles)	95	140	3110

5.

Sl. No.	Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journeys in a month
TP-5 at Km 23+500(RHS)				
01	Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	20	30	680
02	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	35	50	1100
03	Truck / Bus (2 Axle)	70	105	2300
04	3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	75	115	2510
05	Heavy Construction Machinery / Earth Moving Equipment or MAV (4-6 Axles)	110	160	3610
06	Oversized Vehicles (7 or more axles)	130	200	4395

Note:
1. The rate of Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs. 3075/-
2. The fee rates mentioned above in the table and the amount of monthly pass for the local personal traffic are subject to annual revision from 1st April every year on the basis of the provisions of the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008 & its amendments.

Sd/-
(K.B Jayakumar)
Project Director
PIU-Bengaluru

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, SANTOSH BASAVARAJ, S/o C.S. Basavaraj, age 47 years, residing at No. 55, 2nd Cross, Mayanna Layout, Anchepalya, Bengaluru - 560073. In my SSLC Marks Card, my name has been entered as SANTHOSH B, in my PUC Marks Card as SANTOSH B, and in my BSc Degree Certificate as SANTHOSH BASAVRAJ & MBA Certificate as SANTOSH BASAVRAJ. I have sworn to this affidavit before the Hon'ble 38th ACMM Court, Bengaluru, on 27.03.2026 All the names are one and the same. Henceforth, my correct name is SANTOSH BASAVARAJ

I, Abdul Khabeer R/o No:80,1st Floor, Lubbay Masjid Street, Commercial Street Cross, Bengaluru-01 as changed my Name to Trichur Abdul Khabeer.

I, Bhuvaneshwari N, residing at Ashoknagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka, have changed my name to Bhuvana and shall hereafter be known as Bhuvana for all purposes.

I, Keerthana Buddavarapu, residing at Ds Max Savera Apts, Bangalore, hereby declare that I have changed my name to Keerthana Rao for all future purposes.

I, PRAKASH SHARMA, S/o, Ramaprasad Sharma, residing at #163, Thigalara Palya, Hudi, Mahadevapura, Bangalore-560048, have changed my name from PRAKASH SHARMA to JAYAPRAKASH SHARMA, for all purpose, vide affidavit dated: 28.03.2026, sworn before notary Thippeswamy .T, B'lore

LOST & FOUND

I, Narendra Jain.N have Lost My Original Sale deed documents Situated in "Bodichipalli Village of Denkanikottai Taluk, Krishnagiri Dist., Doc NO - 5785/2025, Sy No - 1084/2A2, (Area Extend AC 1.91½ Cents) Agri Land (SRO Kelamangalam) While Some Personal Work Near Masthi, Malur Taluk (Kolar Dist.,) Case Registered No. 2125873/2026, Sakala No - P0012S2600008892, AFFIDAVIT NO - IN-KA20864855429224Y, Finder Please Contact or Return to This Address : Narendra Jain.N, Res/At.T03, I Land Impression Apt, Kudlu Gate, Behind Trident Hyundai Showroom, Kudlugate, B'lore South, Bommanahalli, Phone - 6362260702.

I, K.Susila have Lost My Original Sale deed documents Situated in "Ayyampalyam Village of Bhavani Nagar Taluk. Doc No - 5292/2010, Sy No - 44/3, Plot No - 347 (Area 7000 Sqft), Doc No - 5336/2010, Sy No - 44/3, Plot No - 271(Area 7000 Sqft) in V.H.F Selve Bluemoon Garden City, DTCP NO 29137/95/LA3, (SRO Punjai Pullaiyampatty) while Some Personal Work in B'lore Near Byappanahalli, Case No - 2116371/2026, Sakala No - P0012S2600000803, Aff No - IN-KA20880923150652Y Finder Please Contact or Return to This Address : K.Susila C/O Hemant, Do/No.1844, 3rd Cross, Indira Nagar Main Road, Tippasandra , B'lore. Phone - 9962476335

I, Amit Kumar Srivastava, lost my 10th(ICSE)(Index number:T/2744/005) and 12th(ISC)(Index number: B/3840/002) marksheets and pass certificates issued by CISCE board in the year 2003 and 2005 respectively. Documents were lost in Bengaluru.

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NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India)

PUBLIC NOTICE
ON USER FEE (TOLL) RATES AT CHOWLAGERE TOLL PLAZA
APPLICABLE FROM 01.04.2026 TO 31.03.2027

The public are hereby informed that pursuant to approval of user fee rates vide letter dated 25.03.2026 of NHAI, the User fee rates for use of section from Ch. 184+912 to 209+800 and 216+700 to 220+000 i.e. 28.188 Km. (Hassan to Maranahally section) of NH-75 are going to revise w.e.f.01.04.2026 at Chowlagere Toll Plaza (Chainage:193.020 Km., near Chowlagere village Hassan District) in the State of Karnataka:

Amount in Rs.

Sl. No.	Type of Vehicle	Fee for single journey	Fee for return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journey in a month	Fee for commercial vehicles registered within the district of Plaza
1	Car/ Jeep/ Van or Light Motor Vehicle	50	75	1670	25
2	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	80	120	2695	40
3	Truck or Bus (2 Axle)	170	255	5645	85
4	3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	185	275	6160	90
5	Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM) or Earth Moving Equipment(EME) or Multi Axle Vehicle(MAV) (4 to 6 Axles)	265	400	8855	135
6	Oversized Vehicle (7 or more axle)	325	485	10775	160
	The rate for monthly pass applicable for local non-commercial vehicle residing within a distance of 20 km from the toll plaza shall be Rs.350				

Note: Aforementioned Concessions can be availed only through GoI's FASTag program as per NHAI Policy Circular No.NHAI/13013/CO/2019-20/147464 dt. 15.01.2020 & NHAI Policy Guideline/Management of Monthly Passes/2018, Policy No. 17.5.78 dt. 16.02.2018.

2. The above section was developed as per provisions of Contract Agreement dated 11.05.2016 on EPC mode and Authority Engineer vide letter dated 10.10.2024 certified the completed length of 28.188 Km. for putting on commercial operation. The above rates are applicable for a completed length of 28.188 Km, which comprises of following:

Type of section	Length (Km)	Equivalent Length (Km) for which user fee is to be levied	Lane Configuration
Straight Section	22.050	22.050	4 Lane
Bypasses (costing> Rs.10.0 Cr.)	5.920	5.920	4 Lane
Structures (length>60M)	0.218	0.218	4 Lane

3. The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
   i. Return Journey within 24 Hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%)
   ii. 50 single journey in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount-33%)
   iii. Pass at Rs.350.00/- per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within 20 Km. from Toll Plaza.
   iv. Commercial Vehicle (excluding those plying under national permit) registered in the District of Toll Plaza (discount 50%)
4. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the Amendment to Fee Rules dated 03.12.2010 vide GSR 950(E).
5. The vehicle, which is loaded in excess of permissible load, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
6. The Capital Cost of the Project is Rs. 1021.57 Crore. The user fee (toll) rates shall be reduced to 40% on recovery of capital cost.
7. For viewing the fee notification dated 2008 & its Amendments published in the Gazette, letter of NHAI dated 03.12.2024 containing approval of rates, etc, the website **https://rajmargyatra.nhai.gov.in** may be visited.
8. For any enquiry and or giving complaints/suggestions, please contact Project Director, NHAI,PIU, 44/1, A1, 1st Main, Kuvempur Road, Indranagar, Sathyamangala Layout, Hassan-573201 Ph:08172-240215).

BUILDING A NATION NOT JUST ROADS

Government of India
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS
Project Implementation Unit - Ramanagara (Mysuru)

PUBLIC NOTICE
REVISION OF USER FEE RATES FOR FY 2026-27
AT ATTIGULIPURA, SATHYAGALA, SOMANAHALLI FEE PLAZA ON NH-948.

The public are hereby informed that, pursuant to Toll Gazette Notification No. S.O 5247(E) dated 05.12.2024 and approval of Competent Authority vide letter dated 23.03.2026, the revised user fee (Toll) rates for FY 2026-27, at Attigulipura, Sathyagala, Somanahalli Toll Plazas shall be applicable with effect from 01.04.2026 (00:00 Hrs.) for the use of two/four lane of BRT Tiger Reserve Boundary to Bangalore section of NH-948 (from Km 287.500 to Km 458.420) in the State of Karnataka executed on HAM mode.
The Revised User Fee Rates for FY 2026-27 to be levied at Fee Plaza at Km 288.700, near Attigulipura, Chamarajanagara District, at Km 359.800 near Sathyagala village, Mandya District and at Km 448.900 Somanahalli, Bangalore South District of NH-948 w.e.f 01.04.2026 (00:00 Hrs) on NH-948 in the State of Karnataka are as follows:

Attigulipura Toll Plaza
USER FEE RATES – FY 2026-27

Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journey in a month	Fee for commercial vehicles registered within the district of Plaza	Local monthly pass
Car/Jeep/Van/LMV	35	50	1125	15	350
LCV/LGV/Mini Bus	55	80	1820	25	Not Applicable
Truck Bus (2 Axle)	115	170	3810	55	
3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	125	185	4155	60	
Heavy Construction Machinery/ Earth Moving Equipment or Multi Axle Vehicle (MAV) (4-6 Axles)	180	270	5975	90	
Oversized Vehicles (7 or more Axle)	220	325	7275	110	

Note: All Amounts are in Rupees

Sathyagala Toll Plaza
USER FEE RATES – FY 2026-27

Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journey in a month	Fee for commercial vehicles registered within the district of Plaza	Local monthly pass
Car/Jeep/Van/LMV	75	115	2555	40	350
LCV/LGV/Mini Bus	125	185	4130	60	Not Applicable
Truck Bus (2 Axle)	260	390	8655	130	
3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	285	425	9440	140	
Heavy Construction Machinery/ Earth Moving Equipment or Multi Axle Vehicle (MAV) (4-6 Axles)	405	610	13570	205	
Oversized Vehicles (7 or more Axle)	495	745	16520	250	

Note: All Amounts are in Rupees

Somanahalli Toll Plaza
USER FEE RATES – FY 2026-27

Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journey in a month	Fee for commercial vehicles registered within the district of Plaza	Local monthly pass
Car/Jeep/Van/LMV	85	130	2840	45	350
LCV/LGV/Mini Bus	140	205	4590	70	Not Applicable
Truck Bus (2 Axle)	290	435	9610	145	
3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	315	470	10485	155	
Heavy Construction Machinery/ Earth Moving Equipment or Multi Axle Vehicle (MAV) (4-6 Axles)	450	680	15075	225	
Oversized Vehicles (7 or more Axle)	550	825	18350	275	

Note: All Amounts are in Rupees

1. The following concessions are available as per the Gazette Notification the above-mentioned Toll Plazas: -
   a. No User Fee shall be levied for the use of this section of National Highway from two-wheeler, three-wheeler and tractors.
   b. For Return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles the amount payable is one-half times the fee for one way journey (Discount 25%).
   c. For 50 Single journey in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles the Fee payable is Two-third of amount of the fee payable for fifty single journeys (Discount 33%).
   d. A person who owns a mechanical vehicle registered for non-commercial purposes and resides within a distance of twenty kilometers from the fee plaza can avail a Monthly Pass for Rs.350 (Rupees Three Hundred and Fifty Only per month) for the year 2026-27 and is subject to revision every year as per the provisions of NH Fee Rule 2008 and its amendments thereof.
   e. Fee for commercial vehicle (excluding vehicles plying under National permit) registered in the district where the fee plaza falls shall be 50% of the specified rate for that category of vehicle.
2. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the amendment to NH Fee Rules.
3. The Toll notification for this Plaza Toll Gazette Notification No. S.O 5247(E) dated 05.12.2024 has been published in Gazette of India.
4. For any complaints, emergency, suggestion and feedback please contact NHAI help line number 1033 or contact Office of the Project Director, No. 609, Sri Chamundeswari Railway Layout, Shyadanahalli, Mysuru Taluk & Dist. Pin No. 570003.
5. As per the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008, vide the Gazette amendment Notification No. G.S.R. 388 (E) dated 17th June, 2025, the fee for FASTag Annual Pass for non-commercial cars, jeeps, and vans is revised to Rs. 3,075 for the Financial Year 2026–27, for 200 fee-plaza crossings or 1 year validity whichever is earlier.

BUILDING A NATION NOT JUST ROADS

Big boost: Navy gets delivery of two warships, one survey vessel in a day

Surendra.Singh@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: In a big boost to India's maritime strength amid the increasing presence of China in the Indian Ocean Region, the Indian Navy Monday received deliveries of two warships, including a stealth frigate, and one large survey ship from Garden Reach Shipbuilding and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) in Kolkata in just one day.

While Dunagiri is the fifth warship of Nilgiri class made under the Project 17A and delivered to the Navy in the last 16 months, Agray is the fourth of eight Arnala class anti-submarine warfare shallow water warship that will augment the Navy's anti-submarine and mine-warfare and coastal surveillance capabilities (ASW-SWCs). Sanshodhak is a large survey vessel that is capable of full-scale coastal and deep-water hydrographic survey of port and harbour approaches and determination of navigational channels and routes.

Shah: Talks on with lone Maoist central committee member

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Union home minister **Amit Shah** on Monday said talks were on with the only active member of the CPI (Maoist) central committee, while others have either surrendered or have been killed. Though he did not mention any name, the reference seemed to be to Mihir Besra, who is active in the Jharkhand region and whose surrender will bring the Centre to the brink of fulfilment of its vow to get rid of Maoism.

Two days before the deadline set by the Centre for eradication of Naxalites, Shah said India has become "Naxal-mukt" and called it the top achievement of the Modi govt, even as he accused Congress of being cosy with Naxal supporters. He said it was fallacious to argue that Naxalism was rooted in justice for tribals and lack of development in tribal areas. It were Naxalites who were responsible for lack of development, he said.

Replying to a discussion in Lok Sabha on the "efforts to free the country from Left-wing extremism", Shah hailed police forces of states and CRPF's CoBRA (Commando Battalions for Resolute Action) for heroically taking on the Naxal challenge. However, he laid equal stress on what he called the political will of the Modi govt, suggesting that the change of UPA govt was a turning point.

Shah alleged that the leader of the opposition in LS, Rahul Gandhi, had shared public space with Naxals and their sympathisers on many occasions, and Naxal outfits had joined his Bharat Jodo Yatra. He said that during a protest at India Gate, slogans in favour of naxal leader Hidma, who was killed by police, were raised, and Rahul Gandhi had posted that video on social media.

Shah claimed the National Advisory Council of Sonia Gandhi under UPA govt had members associated with Naxalites, and accused then Congress minister Jairam Ramesh of writing to a state for release of Mahest Raut, a PM Rural Development Fellow, who was arrested for Naxal links. He also mentioned the inclusion of Binayak Sen — known for being "pro-Naxal" — in the Planning Commission under UPA. Shah said success against Naxals in Chhattisgarh was solely because of one factor — defeat of the Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress govt in the state.

Omar backs 57-yr-old walnut tree felling ban law

Naseer.Ganai@timesofindia.com

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir chief minister **Omar Abdullah** Monday made a strong pitch against a bill brought by his own party MLA that seeks to grant landowners the right to cut walnut trees on their property.

Omar said passage of the bill would harm the country's largest walnut economy, of which Kashmir accounts for about 90%, and would rob J&K of a key part of its identity. The bill, moved by National Conference legislator from Pahalgam, Altaf Ahmad Wani, sought amendments to the Jammu and Kashmir Preservation of Specified Trees Act, 1969, to allow felling of walnut trees on private land.

Under the 1969 law, no person is allowed to cut a walnut tree, whether on private or state land, without prior permission from the competent authority and any violation of law attracts a fine ranging from Rs 1,000 to Rs 10,000.

बिहार सरकार

समाहरणालय, मुजफ्फरपुर
(मद्यनिषेध एवं उत्पाद विभाग)
–: अल्पकालीन आम नीलामी सूचना :–

एतद् द्वारा सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मुजफ्फरपुर जिलान्तर्गत मद्यनिषेध एवं उत्पाद अधिनियम, 2016 (यथा संशोधित) के अधीन विभिन्न थाना कांडो / उत्पाद वादो में जब्त एवं समाहर्त्ता–सह–जिला दंडाधिकारी, मुजफ्फरपुर एवं अन्य गठित अधिहरण न्यायालय द्वारा सुसंगत प्रावधानों के तहत राज्यसात् करने के उपरांत मोटरयान निरीक्षक, मुजफ्फरपुर के द्वारा समर्पित मूल्यांकन प्रतिवेदन के आलोक में दिनांक–14.01.2026 को आहूत मूल्यांकन समिति के बैठक में मूल्यांकन राशि पर अंतिम रूप से सहमति के उपरांत वाहनों की सार्वजनिक नीलामी **"जहाँ है, जैसे है, उसी स्वरूप में"** के आधार पर गठित समिति (अध्यक्ष एवं सदस्यगण) के द्वारा प्रथम नीलामी **दिनांक–08.04.2026** को समय **पूर्वाह्न 11:30 बजे, स्थान–जिला परिषद भवन, मुजफ्फरपुर के सभाकक्ष** में की जाएगी। उक्त तिथि को किसी कारणवश नीलामी की प्रक्रिया अपूर्ण रहने की स्थिति में आवश्यकतानुसार उसके अगले कार्य दिवस को जाएगी तथा प्रथम नीलामी के पश्चात् शेष बचे वाहनों की द्वितीय एवं तृतीय नीलामी अधोलिखित सारणी के अनुसार संपन्न की जाएगी।

क्रम संo	विवरण	वाहनों की सूची क्रमांक	नीलामी का स्थान	आवेदन जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि	नीलामी की तिथि
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	प्रथम नीलामी	1 से 70 तक	जिला परिषद भवन, मुजफ्फरपुर।	04.04.2026	08.04.2026
2	द्वितीय नीलामी	प्रथम नीलामी के पश्चात् शेष बचे वाहन		15.04.2026	17.04.2026
3	तृतीय नीलामी	द्वितीय नीलामी के पश्चात् शेष बचे वाहन		24.04.2026	28.04.2026

कर्नाटक

क्र	वाहन निबंधन संख्या / चेसिस संख्या / ईंजन संख्या	निबंधन की तिथि	वाहन का प्रकार	अधिहरण वाद संख्या / थाना कांड / पीo आरo संख्या	वाहन का प्रयुक्तम निर्धारित मूल्य	सुरक्षित जमा राशि (20%)	वाहन स्थल संबंधित थाना / परिसर	वाहन स्वामी का नाम एवं पता	अभ्युक्ति
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	KA04D-5450 Chasis No-MA6ABCA5DDH 000060 Engine No-3AN163229	04.02.2013	एम्बुलेंस	अधिहरण वाद संख्या–228 / 2023–24 कौंटी थाना कांड संख्या–648 / 23, दिनांक–21.08.2023	45000.00	9000.00	कौंटी थाना	जी मुरली, पिता– गोपाल, साo–बथा, सीoआरoएसo, अंजेनय, टीoएमoपीoएलo एसoटीoआरoटीo पेदिउर, चेंगलुरू, राज्य–कर्नाटक, पिन–560001	–

सहायक आयुक्त मद्यनिषेध,
मुजफ्फरपुर

विस्तृत जानकारी **state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar** से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।
PR. No.027365 (Excise) 2025-26

नशे से बनानी दूरी है, क्योंकि परिवार जरूरी है।

GOVT. OF N.C.T. OF DELHI
MAULANA AZAD MEDICAL COLLEGE &
ASSOCIATED HOSPITALS: NEW DELHI -110002

MAMC ANNUAL DAY

The 66th Annual Day Function of Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi will be held in the **College Auditorium** on **Thursday, 09th April, 2026 at 2:30 P.M.**

Dr. V. K. Paul, Member Niti Aayog has very kindly consented to be the **Chief Guest** on this occasion. **Dr. Pankaj Kumar Singh,Hon'ble Minister of Health& Family Welfare, GNCT of Delhi**, will preside over the function. **Sh. Rupesh Kumar Thakur , IAS, Secretary(H&FW), Govt. of NCT of Delhi** will be the Guest of Honour of the function.

All MBBS/ BDS students who have completed their Internship in 2025 and Post Graduates who have passed out in 2025 are eligible for award of MBBS/BDS/MS/MD Degrees and Diplomas on the 66th Annual Day. All eligible Students for award of degree are required to attend the rehearsal for distribution of scrolls and prizes on **08th April, 2026 at 2.30 P.M.**

All Alumni of Maulana Azad Medical College, Ex-faculty members, Parents of Degree recipients, Winners of Medals and Prizes and the Trustees of the Awards, are invited to attend the ceremony on **09th April, 2026 at 2:30 P.M.**

Kindly visit the College website https://mamc.delhi.gov.in/ for instructions with regard to the 66th Annual Day of MAMC.

DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0481/25-26 **Dean**

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India)
Project Implementation Unit, Tumakuru

PUBLIC NOTICE ON USER FEE (TOLL) RATES AT RAJATADRIPURA TOLL PLAZA APPLICABLE FROM 01.04.2026

The public is hereby informed that pursuant to approval of user fee rates vide Regional Office, Bengaluru letter dated 27.03.2026, the user fee rates for use of 47.49Kms (equivalent length=51.405) for section from Km.12+300 to Km.83+800 (Mallasandra-Karadi & Karadi-Banwara section) of NH-206 are going to be as under w.e.f. 01.04.2026 (00:00 Hrs.) at Rajatadripura Toll Plaza (Chainage: 49+850 km, near Rajatadripura village, Tiptur Taluk, Tumkur District.

Category of Vehicles	Fee for Single Journey (in Rs.)	Fee for return journey (within a day) 24 hours from the time of opayment (in Rs.)	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month (One month from the date of payment) (in Rs.)	Fee per trip for the commercial vehicles registered within the district of the fee plaza (in Rs.)
Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	80	115	2590	40
Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	125	190	4185	65
Bus or Truck (two Axles)	265	395	8765	130
Three –Axle Commercial Vehicles	285	430	9560	145
Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM) or Earth Moving Equipment (EME) or Multi Axle Vehicle (MAV) (four to Six Axles)	410	620	13745	205
Oversized Vehicle (Seven or more axles)	500	755	16735	250
The rates for monthly pass applicable for local non-commercial vehicle residing within a radius of 20 Km from the toll plaza shall be Rs.350.00				

2. The above section was developed as per provisions of Concession Agreement dated: 20.04.2018 and on Hybrid Annuity Mode and Independent Engineer has certified the completed length of the project for putting on commercial operation. The above rates are applicable for a completed length of 47.49km which comprises the following:

Type of section	Length (km)	Equivalent Length (km) for which user fee is to be levied	Lane configuration
Straight Section	41.36	41.36	4
Bypass (costing > Rs.10.0 Cr.)	6.030	9.045	4
Structures (length > 60m)	0.100	1.000	6

3. The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
   i. Return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%).
   ii. 50 Single journeys in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 33%).
   iii. Pass at Rs.350 /- per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within the radius of 20 km from toll plaza.
   iv. Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075 for One year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings.
   v. Commercial vehicle (excluding those plying under national permit) registered in the District of Toll Plaza (discount 50%).
4. The above rates are applicable for the year 2026-27 i.e, from 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027, after which the rates shall be revised, in accordance with the rule 5 of the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collections) Rules, 2008.
5. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the Amendment to Fee Rules dated: 03.12.2010 vide GSR 950 (E).
6. The vehicle which is loaded in excess of permissible load specified for its category under the rules, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
7. The fee rates shall be displayed for information of the users in accordance with rules 12 of the said rules.
8. For viewing the fee notification bearing S O No: 3182(E) dated 12.07.2022 published in Gazette, letter of NHAI dated 26.03.2025 containing approval of rates, etc, the website **http://tis.nhai.gov.in** may be visited.
9. For any enquiry and or giving complaints/suggestions, please contact Project Director, NHAI, PIU-Tumakuru, 80 ft road, Mahalakshmi Nagar, Batawadi, Tumakuru (Ph: 0816-2955145)

BUILDING A NATION NOT JUST ROADS

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-PROCURMEMENT TENDER NOTICE NO.SWR/W /TS/USFD/2026/03/E Dated: 25-03-2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Name of work	Approx. Value
Ultrasolnic Testing of AT Welds on loop lines in Mysuru Division. **(E-Tender No. SWR-MYS-USFD-ATW-202602)**	Rs. 15,36,480/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 23-04-2026**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Engineer / Track Procurement Head Quarters/ Hubballi
PUB/1026/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Procurement (IREPS) Tender Notice No. H-GS-UBL-09-2025-26 Dated : 24-03-2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders (IREPS) for the following work:

Description of work	Approx. Value
Request for Proposal (RFP) for appointment of Authority Engineer for providing project management services for Design, Supply, Construction, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated Rolling Stock Coaching Depot at Hubballi including All Civil, Electrical General, Electrical Traction, Signalling & Telecom Works and Machinery, Tools & Plants" (the "Project") through Engineering, Procurement and Construction (the "EPC")	Rs. 2,01,20,399/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 15-04-2026**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Chief Project Manager/Gati Shakti Hubballi
PUB/1022/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreservedtickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

COCHIN PORT
कोचिन पत्तन प्राधिकरण
Cochin Port Authority
Chief Engineer's Office, Cochin-682 009
E-TENDER NOTICE
No:T10/T-2093/2026-C Dt. 31.03.2026
Online Bids are invited for **"Reconstruction of Q2-Q3 berths at Mattancherry wharf of Cochin Port (Retender)"**
Estimated Cost: Rs.66.41 Crore
For details, visit:
www.cochinport.gov.in, www.tenderwizard.com/copt & www.tenders.gov.in from 01-04-2026 onwards
Sd/-
CHIEF ENGINEER
(Ph.0484-258 2400/2404)

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Electrical (Project) Branch
OPEN TENDER
The **Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer (Project), West Central Railway, Jabalpur,** for and on behalf of the President of India, invites **E-Tenders** from the reputed and experienced contractors through ON-Line for the following works. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. **NIT No.:** JBP-ELP-OHE-T-2025-03R, dt. 26.03.2026. **Name of work with location: Design, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of Upgradation to electric traction system from 1 x 25 kV to 2 x 25 kV in Shridham - Bhadanpur section of JBP Division, West Central Railway. Approx. Cost of the work:** ₹ 159,48,73,424/-. **Cost of tender form:** Nil. **Address of the office:** Dy.CEE/Project/Jabalpur, West Central Railway, G-Floor, CPM-Electrical Building, Aside Railway Stadium, JBP-482001 (M.P.). **Bid Security:** ₹ 3,18,97,500/-. **Completion Period:** 18 months. **Date & Time for submission of tender:** 27.04.2026 (up to 15.00 Hrs.). **Date & Time for opening of tender:** 27.04.2026 (at 15.30 Hrs.). Complete details of tender document available on the Railway website **https://ireps.gov.in** and also placed on notice board of Dy. CEE/P/JBP office.
स्वच्छ भारत अभियान एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identification Number (CIN) : U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in
(Dy. CE/Hydel Project PSPCL, Patiala Contact Number 9646118754)
Tender Enquiry No. 353/HPs/ED-II/RSD-160 Dated: 01.04.2026
Dy. CE/ Hydel Projects, PSPCL, Shed A-3, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala Invites E-Tender for Supply, erection, testing and commissioning of 1 no Oil Filtration Set for turbine and generator oil at RSD Shahpurkandi.
For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 06.04.2026 onwards.
NOTE : Corrigendum and Addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in
C- 440/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2025-26/10052

मुख्यमंत्री निःशुल्क जाँच योजना
Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Limited, Jaipur
D-Block, Swasthya Bhawan, C-Scheme, Jaipur – 302005
Ph. No. 0141-2223887, Fax No. 0141-2228065 E-Mail –edepmrmsc-rj@nic.in
No.F-8() RMSC/EPM/M-4/NIB-933/2025-26/1903 Dated: 24-03-2026
Corrigendum / Addendum
Bid for item
1. Deep Freezer, Fowler Bed, Stead Bed, Foot Step, Syringe Infusion Pump, Glucostrip & Pulse Oxymeter (Handheld) ,
2. White Box (Sharp Container), & Transport Trolley (Wheel Barrow) Reserve for MSE, Rajasthan Only

are invited from interested bidders up to Date: 31.03.2026 : 06:00 P.M. Other particulars of the Corrigendum / Addendum may be visited on Procurement portal website **"https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in"** or **"www.dipronline.org"** or **"https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in"** or website **"http://rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in"**.
UBN:- (MSC2526GLOB00056)
Raj.Samwad/C/25/23535 **Executive Director (EPM)**

At the World-Renowned Koba Tirth
On the Auspicious Occasion of
Bhagwan Mahavir Janma Kalyanak
Grand Inauguration of the

SAMRAT SAMPRATI MUSEUM

by the Hon'ble Prime Minister

Shri Narendra Modi

भारत विरासत महोत्सव

Auspicious Blessings
Tapagacchadhipati, Paramopakari Pujyapad Acharyadev
Shri Manoharkirtisagar Surishwarji Maharaja

Visionary Patron of the Museum
Rashtrasant Param Pujya Acharyadev Shri Padmasagar Surishwarji Maharaja

Chief Guest
Shri Acharya Devvrat
Hon'ble Governor, Gujarat

Distinguished Presence
Shri Bhupendra Patel
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Gujarat

Shri Harsh Sanghavi
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Gujarat

Organiser
Shri Mahavir Jain Aradhana Kendra
Shri Sudhir Mehta — President
and the entire Board of Trustees, Koba Tirth, Gandhinagar (Gujarat)

Co-organiser
UNM Foundation | Torrent Group

UNM FOUNDATION TORRENT

31 **March** 2026 | **08:30** AM | **Shri Mahavir Jain Aradhana Kendra,** Koba, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

SCAN FOR LIVE STREAMING

Key Highlights of the Samrat Samprati Museum

A modern architectural marvel spanning **95,000 sq. ft.**	A rare exhibition of over **2,000 artefacts** encompassing ancient knowledge, sculpture, and art	A curated collection of **priceless heritage** pieces from across the states of India	**Seven magnificent galleries** tracing a history spanning thousands of years	**Exquisite ancient sculptures** depicting the benevolent lives of the Jain Tirthankaras	Inspiring biographical displays of eminent **historical figures**	**Historic artistic scrolls** and rare calligraphic materials	**Ancient manuscripts** of the Agamas, Vedas, Puranas, and other sacred texts

FESTIVAL OF TALENT

SPOTLIGHT

Igniting innovation and celebrating creativity

Students from across India came together for two days of competitions and celebrations at ASHV 2K26

Nayanthara.Rajeev
@timesofindia.com

Bringing together innovation, talent, and a vibrant cultural spirit, Madanapalle Institute of Technology & Science (MITS deemed to be university) organised the ASHV 2K26 National Level Techno-Cultural Sports Fest. Conducted in association with The Times of India, the two-day event on March 25 and 26 was celebrated with great enthusiasm and grandeur.

The fest welcomed students from across the country to showcase their talents in technology, culture, and sports. The inaugural ceremony was graced by the founder and chancellor of MITS University, Nadella Vijaya Bhaskar Choudary, who lit the ceremonial lamp to mark the commencement of the grand event.

Addressing the gathering, the chancellor highlighted that such events create unforgettable memories in students' lives. He emphasised the importance of balancing academics with entertainment and friendships, while appreciating the enthusiastic participation of students. He further noted that beyond academics, students must explore their interests, nurture creativity, and develop essential life skills such as leadership, teamwork, and adaptability, adding that in today's competitive world, these qualities are as important as technical knowledge. ASHV 2K26 exemplified this philosophy, serving as a platform where talent meets opportunity and creativity meets confidence.

The fest featured a diverse range of events, including technical competitions, sports, dance, music, fashion, and fine arts, making it a comprehensive celebration of talent and spirit. The musical night and the presence of film personalities added excitement and vibrancy to the festivities.

Blending technology, sports, arts, and meaningful interactions, ASHV 2K26 fest not only showcased the diverse abilities of students but also fostered creativity, leadership, and community engagement

A major highlight was the grand launch of the trailer of the film 'Raakasa', unveiled by the film team, including Konidela Niharika, Sangeeth Shobhan, Nayan Sarika, and Getup Srinu. The excitement continued with captivating performances by renowned singers Sagar, Lipsika Bhashyam, and Mounika Yadav, enthralling the audience.

On the second day, popular film personalities Sharwanand and Malavika Nair interacted with students and delivered inspiring messages. Sharing his personal journey, Sharwanand spoke about overcoming phases of confusion, struggle, and loneliness, emphasising that success comes to those who persevere. He encouraged students to dream big, stay focused, and not be discouraged by criticism. He also emphasised the importance of appreciating those who support us during challenging times and encouraged students to enjoy life and embrace the journey toward success. Addressing parents, he advised against comparing their children with others and stressed that happiness is a crucial factor in a child's growth and overall success.

The event also featured entertaining performances by popular Jabardasth team members and comedians Saddam Hussain, Bindass Bhaskar, Nava Sandeep, and Jabardasth Puli. Their lively comedy acts, spontaneous humor, and engaging stage presence created an atmosphere filled with laughter and excitement.

Students performed a captivating Ramayanam skit along with vibrant presentations of Dashavatharam, Bahubali, and other thematic acts which reflected the students' creativity, dedication, and strong cultural values, making the event both entertaining and meaningful. The enthusiastic participation and execution added grandeur to the program, leaving a lasting impression on all attendees.

The event was attended by pro-chancellor Nadella Dwarakanath, vice-chancellor C Yuvaraj, registrar D Pradeep Kumar, principal P Ramanathan, convener C Kamal Basha, core committee members V Maruthi Prasad, K Md. Riyaz Ali, Syed Ismail, co-conveners C Damodharan, Y Pradeep Kumar, M Sri Lakshmi Preethi, B S H Shayeez Ahamed, Sai Kiran, Renuka, and other dignitaries. Several distinguished alumni also participated, sharing their expertise and inspiring experiences with the students.

RUSSELL BRAND'S RAPE TRIAL, WHICH WAS SET TO BEGIN FROM JUNE 16, IS NOW PUSHED TO OCT 12; EXPECTED TO LAST 2 MTHS

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2026

CATERPILLAR DOES ALL THE WORK, BUT BUTTERFLY GETS ALL THE PUBLICITY — GEORGE CARLIN

SOPHIE TURNER SUFFERS 'MINOR INJURY', HALTS PRODUCTION OF AMAZON'S TOMB RAIDER SERIES

Sustained war in Iran depletes high-end missile stocks of US

Pressure Mounts On Washington To Defend Gulf Nations

Reuters

An industrial building and a fuel tanker at an Israeli oil refinery hit by debris from an intercepted Iranian missile in Haifa on Monday

AFP

A first responder stands next to the wreckage of a vehicle at the site of an Israeli airstrike in the Lebanese village of Hanouiyeh on Monday

Despite unrelenting US and Israeli airstrikes, Iran has launched almost 1,200 ballistic missiles and 4,000 rudimentary Shahed cruise missiles at Gulf countries since the war began, according to those countries' official reports, which are not comprehensive.

Ballistic missile defence calls for firing at least twice at each target, given the doctrine of shoot-shoot-look, in which crews launch two times and then check the result. That implies at least 2,400 interceptors fired over the course of the war, and perhaps many more, since sometimes additional missiles are needed to defend against incoming projectiles. The vast majority were Patriot PAC-3 and GEM-T missiles, of which Gulf countries had less than 2,800 before the war, based on US foreign military sales authorisations, and estimates by three experts and a person familiar with the matter.

The US defence department said it had all the munitions needed to complete its missions. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) documents show how many missiles were requested or authorised, but a smaller number may have been delivered. While Lockheed Martin Corp. makes about 650 PAC-3 interceptors per year, the company signed an agreement in Jan to make 2,000 a year by 2030. The company also makes 96 THAAD interceptors per year, but reached a separate deal to increase that number to 400.

The United States has also launched hundreds of $2 million Tomahawk missiles and more than 1,000 of the stealthier $1.5 million JASSMs, according to the person familiar with the matter, who didn't want to be named. Although many strikes have switched to the cheaper Joint Direct Attack Munitions, or JDAM, cruise missiles remain in heavy use because parts of Iran's airspace remain risky for close-in operations.

There were about 4,000 Tomahawks in US stockpiles before the war, and RTX Corp. produces about 100 each year; Lockheed can build at most about 860 JASSMs this year, according to govt documents. Both missiles are designed to fly long distances. These types of weapons are crucial for a conflict against an advanced adversary like China.

"Allowing the high-end weapons to run down does suggest the US thinks it won't need to fight China or can win quickly," said Peter Layton, a former Royal Australian Air Force officer and a visiting fellow at the Griffith Asia Institute. "It is interesting strategically in that it suggests the Trump administration sees Iran as the most important issue and is willing to bet the farm on destroying it."

The drain on munitions has alarmed US allies around the world, as weapons systems and ammunition have been pulled to support the campaign against Iran. The Pentagon is considering diverting weapons shipments meant for Ukraine to the Gulf region, according to the Washington Post. Those supplies include missile interceptors.

Officials in Germany and France, with two of the continent's most powerful militaries, say they see signs of strain in supplies of certain arms. "A prolonged US involvement in the war in Iran would place a significant strain on the US military's stocks," said Thomas Erndl, defence policy spokesperson for German Chancellor Friedrich Merz. BLOOMBERG

Rubio says he got positive message from Iran privately

Washington: US secretary of state Marco Rubio on Monday voiced hope for working with elements within Iran's govt, saying the United States privately had received positive messages. Rubio said there were internal "fractures" inside the Islamic republic and that the US hopes figures with "power to deliver" take charge. "We are hopeful that that's the case," Rubio told the ABC News program "Good Morning America." "There are clearly people there talking to us in ways that previous people in charge in Iran have not spoken to us in the past, some of the things they're willing to do," he said. Rubio nonetheless also denounced the Islamic republic in broad strokes, insisting that the war aimed to end its nuclear weapons building capacity, which President Trump said he accomplished during an attack last year. AFP

US planes involved in war cannot use our airspace: Spain

Madrid: Spain has closed its airspace to US planes involved in the Iran war, the defence minister said Monday. The country already said the US couldn't use jointly operated military bases in the Iran conflict, which Spain's PM Pedro Sanchez has described as illegal, reckless and unjust.

Defence minister Margarita Robles on Monday said the same logic applied to the use of Spanish airspace in the conflict. "This was made perfectly clear to the American military and forces from the very beginning. Therefore, neither the bases are authorised, nor, of course, is the use of Spanish airspace authorised for any actions related to the war in Iran," Robles told reporters. AP

Gabbard softer on Iran N-issue: Trump

US President Trump Sunday hinted at differences among his top aides on their approach to Iran, saying that his intelligence chief Tulsi Gabbard was "softer" than him on curbing Tehran's nuclear ambitions. Trump said "yeah, sure," when asked by a reporter whether he retained confidence in Gabbard, the US director of national intelligence. "She's a little bit different in her thought process than me," Trump said. "But that doesn't make somebody not available to serve... I'm very strong on the fact that I don't want Iran to have a nuclear weapon because if they had a nuclear weapon, they'd use it immediately. I think she's probably a little bit softer on that issue, but that's okay." REUTERS

Kharg key to Iran's oil exports. Targeting island has major risks

Reuters

A Feb satellite image of an oil terminal at Kharg Island

Iran's Kharg Island, home to a terminal through which the country exports most of its oil, has emerged as a focus of the month-old war. Strikes on oil infrastructure on Kharg — or a ground invasion — would severely curb Iran's oil exports, a key source of revenue for the Islamic Republic.

It would also mark a major escalation that could provoke even heavier retaliatory attacks on Gulf Arab infrastructure and further drive up oil prices. The skyrocketing cost of fuel is already threatening the world economy.

A US occupation of the island would put American troops in a stationary position just 33 kms off Iran's coast, well within range of its arsenal of drones and missiles. Other islands near the Strait of Hormuz could also be targeted. Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunb islands are held by Iran but long claimed by the UAE, a US ally. Qeshm Island is home to a desalination plant.

Kharg, the small coral island, houses the terminal through which nearly all of Iran's oil exports pass. Iran has continued to export oil through the Strait of Hormuz even as its attacks have closed the vital waterway to most traffic. The destruction or loss of the island would deny Tehran a major revenue source, but it would also remove even more oil from world markets at a time of soaring prices. The destruction of the terminal would severely damage Iran's economy and would also undermine any future govt that might emerge.

President Trump said strikes in mid-March "obliterated" Kharg's military assets but did not target the island's oil infrastructure. He warned that if Iran continued disrupting traffic through the Strait of Hormuz he would reconsider the decision to spare energy targets on the island.

Kharg Island has storage tanks and housing for thousands of workers. Gazelles roam freely near the refineries and depots. It also is home to a medieval Portuguese fortress and the ruins of one of the oldest Christian monasteries in the Persian Gulf.

The three tiny Persian Gulf islands guarding the approach to the Strait of Hormuz have long been a source of tension between Iran and the UAE.

Iranian forces seized the islands in Nov 1971, days after the UK withdrew from the Gulf and just before the formation of the UAE. Iran maintains military assets and garrisons on the islands, and has staged military drills there. Iran says the islands have been part of Persian states from antiquity up until they were occupied by the British in the 20th century. UAE claims all three islands.

The largest island in the Persian Gulf sits near the Strait of Hormuz and is home to about 150,000 people. Iran said the US struck a desalination plant on the island on March 8 — a claim not acknowledged by Washington. The desalination plant supplied water to about 30 villages. AP

Students in Doha facility evacuated after Iran threat to US univs in the region

▶Continued from P1

In separate remarks to reporters on Air Force One, Trump said he would decimate Iran if it did not hand over "nuclear dust" (uranium) while claiming Tehran has almost surrendered and offered the US 20 boats laden with oil as a "tribute".

"If they don't do that (give up nuclear quest) they are not going to have a country," Trump said in an explicit threat of annihilation.

Trump's threat to decimate Iran's infrastructure came even as Iran defiantly continued to strike US assets in the region despite its military being attrited by American and Israeli strikes. In a dangerous escalation that brought the region's drinking water infrastructure under fire on top of oil assets under attack, Kuwait accused Iran of bombing its desalination plants, a charge Tehran denied and claimed it was Israel which had attacked the plants to blame Iran.

Many of the region's countries depend on desalination plants for their drinking water needs (90% in case of Kuwait) and any targeting of such plants, whether by the US or Israel or Iran, is liable to be treated as a war crime. Many such plants are run by workers from India.

Trump's public threat to hit desalination plants constitutes an unprecedented escalation, coming on top of US attacks on educational institutions – authenticated by the western media – that have killed scores of students. Trump's war on Iran, viewed as reckless by scores of American critics, is hugely unpopular in the US, including among his MAGA base.

Following yet another purported strike on an Iranian university, Tehran said Monday that it reserved the right to strike back at US institutions in West Asia, causing Qatar, an academic hub in the region, to evacuate all students housing in Doha's 'Education City'. US universities such as Carnegie Mellon, Georgetown, and Texas A&M have campuses in Doha.

Tehran warned that it would hit back at residences of US and Israeli officials in the region after being subjected to targeted assassination of its leadership.

Crypto fuels drone purchases in Russia and Iran, says report

Groups linked to Russia and Iran are increasingly using cryptocurrency to finance the purchase of low-cost military drones and components, according to a new report from blockchain analytics firm Chainalysis. Commercially available drones have become central to conflict in Ukraine and West Asia, but because low-cost drones are widely available on global e-commerce platforms, it is often challenging for authorities to track who is behind the purchases and what their intent with the products might be.

While most drone purchases are made using traditional financial rails, procurement networks are increasingly intersecting with the blockchain, Chainalysis found. Since 2022, pro-Russia groups have raised more than $8.3 million in crypto donations, and drones have been among the itemised purchases made with those donations, the report said. Chainalysis could match transactions in crypto for between $2,200 and $3,500 to the exact price of drones, Fierman said. REUTERS

Iran calls US peace proposals 'unrealistic, illogical & excessive'

AP

A woman walks past a damaged residential area in Tehran on Monday

Iran on Monday described US peace proposals as "unrealistic" and fired waves of missiles at Israel.

Israel's military said two drones from Yemen had also been intercepted on Monday, two days after the Iran-aligned Houthis entered the war by firing missiles at Israel, and that Lebanon's Hezbollah had fired rockets at Israel. Israeli forces carried out missile strikes on what they called military infrastructure in Tehran and infrastructure used by Iran-backed Hezbollah in Beirut, leaving black smoke hanging over the Lebanese capital.

Iran said on Monday it had received US peace proposals via intermediaries, following talks on Sunday between the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye. But Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said the proposals were "unrealistic, illogical and excessive". "Our position is clear. We are under military aggression. Therefore, all our efforts and strength are focused on defending ourselves," he told a press conference.

Soon after Baghaei's remarks, Trump said in a social media post that the US was in talks with a "more reasonable regime" to end the war in Iran, but he also issued a new warning over the Strait of Hormuz.

Baghaei also said Iran's parliament was reviewing a possible exit from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which recognises the right to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy as long as nuclear weapons are not pursued.

Trump has cited preventing Iran obtaining nuclear weapons as one of the reasons for attacking Iran on Feb 28. Tehran denies it is seeking a nuclear arsenal. REUTERS

Israel strikes IRGC military university: The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) on Monday claimed it targeted the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) key military university, Imam Hossein University, citing its role in advancing Iran's military capabilities. ANI

WAR WOES

Sri Lanka raises electricity costs by up to 40%

Sri Lanka announced on Monday a nearly 40% increase in electricity prices from Wednesday as it battles an energy shortage. The Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka said further increases were likely in April, in-line with global energy prices. For most middle-class consumers, a kilowatt hour of electricity will cost 84 rupees ($0.28), up from 61 rupees or a 39.34% increase, while the lowest consumers — those who use less than 30 kilowatt hours a month — will see their bills rise by 11.11%.

B'desh turns off lights

Bangladesh has ordered civil servants to switch off the lights and turn down air conditioning to save power, officials said Monday. The South Asian nation imports 95% of its oil and gas needs. The ministry of public administration issued a string of orders on Monday. "Only the necessary number of lights, fans, ACs, and other electrical equipment should be used. AC temperatures must be set at 25°C, or warmer," the order read.

Iranian missile downed in Turkiye

A ballistic missile launched from Iran entered Turkish airspace before being shot down by Nato air and missile defences deployed in the eastern Mediterranean, Turkiye's defence ministry said on Monday. The incident marked the fourth such incident since the start of the US-Israeli war with Iran, following three earlier interceptions by Nato systems earlier this month that prompted Ankara to protest and warn Tehran. REUTERS

US missile hit sports hall and school near military facility in Iran, shows analysis

Christiaan Triebert & John Ismay

On the first day of the war with Iran, a weapon bearing the hallmarks of a newly developed US-made ballistic missile was used in an attack that struck a sports hall and adjacent elementary school near a military facility in southern Iran, according to weapons experts and a visual analysis by NYT. Officials cited in Iranian media said this strike and others nearby in the city of Lamerd killed at least 21 people.

NYT verified videos of two strikes in Lamerd, as well as aftermath footage from the attacks. Munitions experts found that the weapon features, explosions and damage are consistent with a short-range ballistic missile called the Precision Strike Missile, or PrSM (pronounced "prism"), which is designed to detonate just above its target and blast tungsten pellets outward.

Videos that capture one strike, in a residential area about 900 feet from the sports hall and school, show the weapon in flight, with a distinctive silhouette that matches the PrSM. The missile erupts in a large fireball midair. Another video, filmed from a security camera directly across from the sports hall, shows the strike on the hall and adjacent school. While the video does not capture an incoming missile, it clearly shows an explosion just above the structure.

There is an Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, or IRGC, compound directly next to the sports hall. It's not known if it was struck in the attack. The PrSM completed prototype testing only last year, according to an Army press release. Since the weapon is so new, it's more difficult to assess whether the PrSM strikes in Lamerd were intentional, stemmed from a design flaw or manufacturing defect, or were the result of improper target.

The sports hall, at the time of the strikes, was being used by a female volleyball team, according to Amir Saeid Iravani, Iran's representative to the UN. Capt Tim Hawkins, a spokesman for US Central Command, said Saturday: "We're aware of the reports and are looking into them. US forces do not indiscriminately target civilians, unlike the Iranian regime." NYT

Pakistan prepares to host US-Iran talks as it strikes Af

Kabul: Afghanistan and Pakistan have traded heavy fire, both sides said, days after they announced a temporary pause in fighting, escalating tensions in the volatile region as Islamabad said it hopes to host potential talks between the US and Iran.

The border clashes came on Sunday, the day Pakistan hosted regional powers to discuss de-escalation in the war in West Asia, with an announcement that Islamabad could host the talks in coming days. Both sides used artillery and heavy weapons to hit locations in Afghanistan's Kunar province and its bordering district of Bajur in Pakistan, officials said.

Pakistan's fire killed at least one person and injured another 16, most of them women and children, said Hamdullah Fitrat, a deputy spokesperson for Kabul's Taliban administration. A Pakistani govt official said the Afghanistan claim was exaggerated. "Some minor violations took place from the Afghan side and we responded to it in the same sector," he said. The officials declined to be identified as they were not authorised to speak to media.

Pak Dy PM to visit China: Pakistan's deputy PM Ishaq Dar has planned to undertake a visit to China on Tuesday for discussions on bilateral ties, after Islamabad hosted foreign ministers from four nations for consultations on West Asia conflict. AGENCIES

DAILY PLANET

Paintings by Renoir, Cezanne, Matisse stolen from museum in Italy

Reuters

'Fish' by Pierre-Auguste Renoir is among the of 3 stolen artworks

Three paintings by French masters Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Cezanne and Henri Matisse, reportedly worth an estimated $10 million in total, have been stolen from a museum in northern Italy, police said on Monday. The theft took place at the Fondazione Magnani Rocca, on the outskirts of the city of Parma, during the night of March 22-23, the Carabinieri police said in a statement. Thieves broke into the building's main entrance and took Cezanne's "Tasse et Plat de Cerises" (Cup and plate of cherries), Renoir's "Les Poissons" (The fish) and Matisse's "Odalisque sur la Terrasse" (Odalisque on the terrace), the police added. Italian public broadcaster Rai reported the stolen works were worth 9 million euros ($10.34m), a figure that was not confirmed by the Carabinieri. The museum, home to a private collection compiled by the late music critic and musicologist Luigi Magnani, said separately that the theft took less than three minutes.

No problem with Russia giving oil to Cuba: Trump

US President Trump on Sunday night said he has "no problem" with a Russian oil tanker off the coast of Cuba delivering relief to the island, which has been brought to its knees by a US oil blockade. "We have a tanker out there. We don't mind having somebody get a boatload because they need to survive," Trump said. On Monday, Russia's transport ministry said the oil tanker Anatoly Kolodkin arrived at the Cuban port of Matanzas carrying "humanitarian supplies" of about 730,000 barrels of oil. The vessel is sanctioned by the US, the EU and the UK following the war in Ukraine. Trump has effectively cut Cuba off from key oil shipments in an effort to force regime change. Trump Sunday dismissed the idea that allowing the boat to reach Cuba would help President Putin. "It doesn't help him. He loses one boatload of oil. If he wants to do that, and if other countries want to do it, it doesn't bother me much," Trump said.

DeepSeek AI chatbot suffers longest outage

China's popular DeepSeek artificial intelligence chatbot suffered on Monday its longest outage since the viral rise of its flagship R1 and V3 models early last year. DeepSeek's status website showed that the chatbot suffered a "major outage" lasting 7 hours and 13 minutes, from the early hours of Monday morning until 10.33am local time, when the incident was marked as resolved. As per company protocol, no reason was given for the outage.

From Belt and Road to belt tightening: China's neighbours get cold shoulder on energy

Beijing: As energy stress spreads across Southeast Asia, govts across the region are asking China to deliver on its pledges of closer energy security cooperation by freeing up now-banned exports of fertiliser and fuel. But so far, China has offered only vague statements and has yet to even publicly acknowledge the export bans as it focuses on insulating its own economy from the war in Iran.

Analysts don't expect that to change, pointing to the tension between China's stated ambition to be a bigger player in regional affairs and the realpolitik of its commitment to keep its own economy outpacing global growth. China is the world's second largest fertiliser exporter and also a large supplier of fuel.

For many countries including Bangladesh, the Philippines and even Australia, Chinese imports are a major source of supply.

Dhaka earlier this month asked China to honour existing fuel contracts, while Thai diplomats will engage Chinese counterparts to keep fertiliser shipments from China flowing if needed, officials in Bangkok said. In Malaysia, officials said last week the Chinese export ban would worsen fertiliser rationing, including in its oil palm industry, the world's second-largest, and add a further blow on top of the war in Iran.

AFP

A petrol station, which has run out of fuel, in Philippines on Monday

Even the Philippines has sought assistance despite the two countries' disputes over the South China Sea. On March 17, the Philippines minister of agriculture visited China's embassy in Manila and said China had agreed to continue fertiliser shipments. Beijing's one-sentence readout said only that they had discussed agriculture. "China may offer some ceremonial assistance, but it's highly unlikely, if not wholly improbable, that it will share any substantive amount of its food, energy, or other reserves with other countries," said Eric Olander, co-founder of China-Global South Project.

In fact, analysts said Chinese policymakers were likely quietly congratulating themselves on the strategic foresight to begin stockpiling since the early 2000s, a policy that may have seemed excessive in peacetime but now looks decidedly practical.

China's flagship Belt and Road infrastructure initiative has seen world leaders regularly congregate in Beijing to discuss 'win-win' cooperation but with the region now short on fuel and fertiliser, Southeast Asian capitals are instead looking for replacements from the likes of Russia. "Beijing has no desire to be a regional energy backstop for an indefinite period of disruption," according to Ruby Osman, a senior policy adviser at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change.

"Only if China gets more comfortable with its own exposure, then I would expect meaningful support," said Max Zenglein, senior economist at the Conference Board Asia. Olander compared the situation to the Covid-19 pandemic, when the region looked to India for vaccines. Osman said China's partners seeing concessions would do well to remind Beijing of its own commitments. "Maybe the key is just to quote this new bit of the five-year plan back to Beijing: 'strengthen international cooperation in food, energy, data, biological and sea passage security, and counter-terrorism.'" REUTERS

Kids born out of wedlock entitled to parent's pension: HC

Srishti.Lakhotia
@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: Children born out of wedlock are entitled to pension benefits from a parent employed by any govt department or institution, Calcutta high court ruled Monday while directing Eastern Railway to include a gateman's first wife and his 15-year-old daughter from another relationship in his service and pension records.

"It is settled law that an illegitimate child is also entitled to get the benefit, if any, from a govt servant," Justice Krishna Rao said. The bench directed authorities to process pension papers immediately and provisionally release all benefits within eight weeks.

The dispute involves the former employee and his wife, who moved court for a directive to Eastern Railway to strike off the names of the woman her husband illegally married and their child from that relationship in the service book.

Man freed after 4 years in jail; FIR ordered on fake rape case

Sudeep.Lavania
@timesofindia.com

Agra: An FIR has been registered against a 26-year-old woman under BNS section 217 (false information to a public servant) for lodging a fake rape and attempt to murder case following a court order in Agra. This comes after a 28-year-old man, who spent four-and-a-half years in jail as "accused", was recently acquitted.

Acting on the court's directive, SHO of Hariparwat police station, Neeraj Sharma, registered the complaint. ADCP (Agra) Akshay Mahadik said, "If someone provides false information to a public servant without any basis to mislead them, then necessary legal action will be taken."

On Dec 1, 2021, the woman had lodged a complaint at Hariparwat accusing Varun (only first name available) of repeated sexual assaults for eight years on the pretext of marriage, and even trying to kill her. Varun was arrested and sent to jail.

Maharashtra Airport Development Company Ltd.
(CIN U45203MH2002SGC136979)

Corrigendum – MADC RECRUITMENT – 2026

With reference to the MADC Recruitment Notice 2026 published in the newspaper dated 07/03/2026, it is hereby informed that, the recruitment process of Regular posts is being kept on hold.

Sd/-
Vice Chairman and Managing Director

In the Court of Ms. Smita Garg, Special Judge (PC Act) (CBI)-13, Court No. 506, Rouse Avenue District Courts, New Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED (See Section 84 BNSS)

CBI VS. SHIVENDRA TOMAR & ORS.
RC No. RC/216/2018/A/2017/AC-1/CBI/NEW DELHI.
Under Sections 120-B r/w Sec 420 of IPC &
Sec 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d) of PC ACT 1988
BRANCH-CBI/AC-1/NEW DELHI.

WHEREAS complaint has been made before me that **PALAMDAI VISWANATH SRINIVAS @ P V SRINIVAS, S/O SH P R VISWANATHAN, R/O 138, 15TH CROSS, 19TH MAIN, 1ST BLOCK RAJAJI NAGAR, BENGALURU, (KARNATAKA)-560010,**

ALSO AT- 38A, NAL SOCIETY, TAVARAKERE VILLAGE, BENGALORE (KARNATAKA)-560010,

ALSO AT- UNIT NO.2, FIRST FLOOR, MONARCH HIMALAYA NO.45, K. G CIRCLE, BENGALORE, KARNATAKA,

ALSO AT- MONARCH NEWERA STAY INN PVT. LTD. NO. 54, BRIGADE ROAD, BENGALURU, KARNATAKA-560025,

ALSO AT- H. NO. 26, II MAIN ROAD, PALAM GROVE FLATS, BESANT NAGAR, CHENNAI, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence of forgery punishable **Under Sections 120-B r/w Sec 420 IPC & Section 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d) of PC Act, 1988** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **PALAMDAI VISWANATH SRINIVAS @ P V SRINIVAS, S/O SH P R VISWANATHAN**, cannot be found, and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **PALAMDAI VISWANATH SRINIVAS @ P V SRINIVAS, S/O SH P R VISWANATHAN** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant);

Proclamation is hereby made that the said PALAMDAI VISWANATH SRINIVAS @ P V SRINIVAS, S/O SH P R VISWANATHAN, is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on the day of dated this 21.05.2026.

Dated this 25th day of March, 2026.

Sd.
Special Judge (PC Act) CBI-13
Court Room No. 506, 6th Floor
Rouse Avenue District Court
New Delhi

CBC 32205/11/0114/2526

MIN. OF DEFENCE
(DRDO)
NAVAL MATERIALS RESEARCH LABORATORY,
Shil Badlapur Road, P.O. Anandnagar
AMBERNATH-421 506. Dist. THANE
(PHONE : 0251 2623039, 202, 079/FAX 0251 2623004)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST NOTICE

The Director, NMRL, Addl. Ambernath, on behalf of the President of India, invites Expression of Interest to procure the following item.

Sl. No.	Reference No.	Nomenclature of item
1	NMRL/MMG/0401/04/EOI/CEC/153/2025-2026 Dated 16th March, 2026	Development of Intelligent Software to Achieve Uniform Ship Hull Potential Distribution with Health Monitoring of Impressed Current Cathodic Protection (ICCP) and Reference Electrode (RE) Systems

1. Preamble:

1.1 The Director, Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL), Ambernath, a Premier laboratory under Defence R&D organization, on behalf of President of India invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from Indian Industries having sufficient experience, expertise and capacity to undertake the job of development of an intelligent software to achieve iso-potential ship hull under cathodic protection.

1.2 Brief introduction of EOI: There is a need to have a development partner for development of an intelligent software to achieve iso-potential ship hull.

1.3 The objective of this EOI is to shortlist technically suitable and competent applicants having in-depth knowledge and proven track record of having successfully executed same or similar kind of contracts. Applicants should be willing to execute the said contract, subject to fulfilling the eligibility criteria laid out as per Annexure-1 Documents are available on Defproc Portal (**defproc.gov.in**)

2. Scope of Work: Identification of Indian Industry for Development of Intelligent Software to Achieve Uniform Ship Hull Potential Distribution with Health Monitoring of Impressed Current Cathodic Protection (ICCP) and Reference Electrode (RE) Systems

Scope of work will be as mentioned in Annexure 2. Documents are available on Defproc Portal (defproc.gov.in) The final scope of work will be formulated after pre-bid conference with eligible Industries.

3. Any information/clarification regarding this subject matter can be obtained from:

(i)Dr A K Satapathy, Sc-F, NMRL
DRDO, Ministry of defence,
MIDC, Shil -Badlapur Road, Ambernath
Thane, Maharashtra-421506
Contact No. 0251-2623158
Email: **akshayk.nmrl@gov.in**, **mmg.nmrl@gov.in**

4. The interested firms may submit their interest with requisite documents through online mode on Defproc portal (**defproc.gov.in**) with compliance statement (format attached herewith in Annexure-1) within 30 days from date of publishing this EOI. The large size document may be submitted offline also.

NOTE :

1. Documents are available on Defproc Portal (defproc.gov.in) against NMRL Ref. No. NMRL/MMG/0401/04/EOI/CEC/153/2025-2026 Dated 16 March, 2026 and relevant forms at Part 1 & Part 2 are available against reference Ref. No. NMRL/MMG/0401/04/EOI/CEC/153/2025-2026 Dated 16 March, 2026 may be downloaded for participating in the Expression of Interest process.

CBC 10301/11/0184/2526

Often, urgent requests for money may signal a phoney.

If a message from a contact seems unusual, verify the authenticity of the message and the person's identity by reaching out via an alternate mode, and if someone tries to exploit you, just say, "I'm not a fool".

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Issued in public interest by
NPCI भारतीय राष्ट्रीय भुगतान निगम
NATIONAL PAYMENTS CORPORATION OF INDIA

Report cyber financial fraud on **helpline no.1930.**

tgthr./03/26/220

MIN. OF DEFENCE
(DRDO)
NAVAL MATERIALS RESEARCH LABORATORY,
Shil Badlapur Road, P.O. Anandnagar
AMBERNATH-421 506. Dist. THANE
(PHONE : 0251 2623039, 202, 079/FAX 0251 2623004)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST NOTICE

The Director, NMRL, Addl. Ambernath, on behalf of the President of India, invites Expression of Interest to procure the following item.

Sl. No.	Reference No.	Nomenclature of item
1	NMRL/MMG/0401/04/EOI/CEC/154/2025-2026 Dated 16th March, 2026	Detailed Design of a Flow Channel Facility System to Investigate the Influence of Seawater Flow on Steels, Physical Scale Model (PSM) & Structures

1. Preamble:

1.1 The Director, Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL), Ambernath, a Premier laboratory under Defence R&D organization, on behalf of President of India invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from Indian Industries having sufficient experience, expertise and capacity to undertake the job of detailed design of seawater flow channel for corrosion & cathodic protection of materials & structures under seawater flow velocity covering low to moderate ship-equivalent Reynolds numbers.

1.2 Brief introduction of EOI: There is a need to have a development partner for detailed design of seawater flow channel.

1.3 The objective of this EOI is to shortlist technically suitable and competent applicants having in-depth knowledge and proven track record of having successfully executed same or similar kind of contracts. Applicants should be willing to execute the said contract, subject to fulfilling the eligibility criteria laid out as per Annexure-1 (Please see on **defproc.gov.in**)

2. Scope of Work: Identification of Indian Industry for Detailed Design of a Flow Channel Facility System to Investigate the Influence of Seawater Flow on Steels, Physical Scale Model (PSM) & Structures).

Scope of work will be as mentioned in Annexure 2 (Please see on defproc.gov.in) The final scope of work will be formulated after pre-bid conference with eligible Industries.

3. Any information/clarification regarding this subject matter can be obtained from:

(i)Dr A K Satapathy, Sc-F, NMRL
DRDO, Ministry of defence,
MIDC, Shil -Badlapur Road, Ambernath
Thane, Maharashtra-421506
Contact No. 0251-2623158
Email: **akshayk.nmrl@gov.in**, **mmg.nmrl@gov.in**

4. The interested firms may submit their interest with requisite documents through online mode on Defproc portal (defproc.gov.in) with compliance statement (format attached herewith in Annexure-1) within 30 days from date of publishing this EOI. The large size document may be submitted offline also.

NOTE :

1. Documents are available on Defproc Portal (defproc.gov.in) against NMRL Ref. No. NMRL/MMG/0401/04/EOI/CEC/154/2025-2026 Dated 16 March, 2026 and relevant forms at Part 1 & Part 2 are available against reference Ref. No. NMRL/MMG/0401/04/EOI/CEC/154/2025-2026 Dated 16 March, 2026 may be downloaded for participating in the Expression of Interest process.

CBC 10301/11/0185/2526

Government of India
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India)
Project Implmentation Unit, Tumakuru

PUBLIC NOTICE
ON USER FEE (TOLL) RATES AT CHOKKENAHALLI TOLL PLAZA ON NH-48 (OLD NH-4) APPLICABLE W.E.F 01.04.2026(00:00 HRS)

The public are hereby informed that pursuant to Govt. of India gazette Notification S.O.1610(E) dated 27.03.2026 and approval of user fee rate vide letter dated 28.03.2026 of NHAI, the User fee (Toll) rates at Chokkenahalli Toll Plaze at Km 61+500 of NH-48 for use of 4/6 lane National Highway for a length of 24.168 Km from Ch.50+000 to Ch.74+168 of Nelamangala Tumkur section of NH-48 (Old NH-4) in the State of Karnataka, the below mentioned user fee rates will be leived from 01.04.2026(00:00 Hrs) at Chokkenahalli Fee Plaza for the year 2026-27 and is subject to revision every year as per NH fee Rule 2008 and its amendments thereof:

CHOKKENAHALLI FEE PLAZA NH-48 (Old NH-4)

USER FEE RATES FY 2026-27

Sl. No.	Type of Vehicle	Single Journey	Fee for Return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journeys in a month	Fee for commercial vehicle registered within the district of plaza	Local monthly pass
1	Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	40	60	1320	20	350
2	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	65	95	2130	30	Not Applicable
3	Truck/Bus (2 Axle)	135	200	4465	65	
4	Three Axle Commercial Vehicles	145	220	4875	75	
5	Heavy Construction Machinery or Earth Moving Equipment (EME) or Multi Axle Vehicles (MAV) (Four to Six Axles)	210	315	7005	105	
6	Oversized Vehicles (Seven or more Axles)	255	385	8525	130	

Note:

1. All amounts are in Rupees.
2. The rates published above are for the year FY 2026-27 applicable w.e.f 01.04.2026 and shall be revised w.e.f 01.04.2027 which is annual rate revision for all the User Fee Plazas across the country as per Rule 5 of the NH Fee Rule 2028.
3. The following concessions are available as per Gazette Notification at above Toll Plaza:
a. No user Fee shall be levied for the use of this section of National Highway from two-wheeler, three-wheeler and tractors.
b. For return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles the amount payable is one-half times the fee for one way journey (Discount 25%)
c. For 50 single journey in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles the Fee payable to Two-third of amount of the fee payable for fifty single journeys (Discount 33%)
d. A person who owns a mechanical vehicle registered for non-commercial purposes and resides within a distance of twenty kilometres from the fee plaza can avail a Monthly Pass for Rs.350/- (Rupees Three Hundred and Fifty only per month) for the year 2026-27 and is subject to revision every year as per the provisions of NH Fee Rule 2008 and its amendments thereof.
e. Fee for commercial vehicle (excluding vehicles plying under National Permit) registered in the district where the fee plaza falls shall be 50% of the specified rate for that category of vehicle.
f. Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for One year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings
4. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the amendment to NH Fee Rules dated 03.12.2010 vide GSR 950E).
5. A mechanical vehicle which is loaded in excess of permissible load specified for its category under sub-rule (2) of rule 4, shall not be permitted to use the National Highway or crossing the tool plaza until the excess load has been removed from such mechanical vehicle. The driver or owner or a person in charge of the mechanical vehicle shall be liable to pay fee for entering the overloaded vehicle on the National Highway for the toll collecting agency, equal to ten times of the fee applicable to such category of mechanical vehicles under sub rule(2) of rule 4.
6. The Toll notification for this Plaza S.O.No.1610(E) dated 27.03.2026 has been published in Gazette of India.
7. For any complaints, emergency, suggestion and feedback please contact NHAI Helpline Number 1033 or contact office of the Project Director, Sri Rakshe, 80feet Road, Mahalakshmi Nagar, Near Krishna College, Batawadi, Tumakuru – 572103.

BUILDING A NATION NOT JUST ROADS

Government of India
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION UNIT - HOSPET

PUBLIC NOTICE ON USER FEE (TOLL) RATES AT JAJIRAKALLU TOLL PLAZA AT K.M.281.430 OF NH-150A APPLICABLE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2026-27

1. The public are hereby informed that pursuant to approval of user fee rates vide letter dated 24.03.2026 of NHAI, the User fee rates for use of section from Km. 266.820 to 277.690 and 278.690 to 308.550 of NH-150A (Bellary-Byrapura section) at Jajirakallu Toll Plaza located at KM. 281.430 in Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh for the Financial Year 2026-27 are going to be as under w.e.f. 00:00 hrs 01.04.2026.

Category of Vehicle	Fee for return journey (in Rupees)	Fee for return journey within a day) twenty four hours from the time of payment) (in Rupees)	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month (one month from the date of payment) (in Rupees)	Fee for commercial vehicles registered within the district of Plaza (In Rupees)
Car/ Jeep/ Van or Light Motor Vehicle	70	105	2315	35
Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	110	170	3740	55
Truck or Bus (2 Axle)	235	350	7830	115
3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	255	385	8545	130
Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM) or Earth Moving Equipment(EME) or Multi Axle Vehicle(MAV) (4 to 6 Axles)	370	555	12280	185
Oversized Vehicle (7 or more axle)	450	675	14950	225
The rate for monthly pass applicable for local non-commercial vehicle residing within a distance of 20 km from the toll plaza shall be Rs.350.00				

2. The above section was developed under HAM (as per provisions of Concession Agreement dated 16.07.2018 and IE vide letter dated 12.04.2022 certified the completed length of 40.73Km. for putting on Commercial Operation). The above rates are applicable for a completed length of 40.73Km, which comprises of following:

Type of section	Length (Km)	Equivalent Length(Km.) for which user fee is to be levied	Lane Configuration
Straight Section	35.3254	35.3254	4 Lane
Bypasses (costing>Rs.10.0 Cr.)	5.11	5.11	4 Lane
Structures (length>60M)	0.2946	2.946	6 Lane

3. The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
i. Return Journey within 24 Hours from time to time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%)
ii. 50 single journeys in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 33%)
iii. Pass at Rs.350/- per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within 20 Km. from Toll Plaza.
iv. Commercial Vehicle (excluding those plying under National Permit) registered in the District of Toll Plaza (discount 50%)
4. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the Amendment to Fee Rules dated 03.12.2010 vide GSR 950(E).
5. The vehicle, which is loaded in excess of permissible load, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
6. The Capital cost of the project is Rs. 1254 Crore.
7. For viewing the fee notification S.O.NO.1135 (E) dated 11.03.2022 published in the Gazette of India and letter of NHAI R.O. Bangalore dated 24.03.2026 containing approval of rates, etc, the website https://tis.nhai.gov.in/ may be visited.
8. For any enquiry and or giving complaints/suggestions and feedback please contact NHAI help line number 1033 or contact office of Project Director, NHAI, Project Implementation Unit (PIU), C-10, Shree Nilayam, 1st Main, 2nd Cross, Vivekananda Nagar, Behind RTO Office, Hospet -583201. Phone: 08394-295569.

A thought for today

Prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future

NIELS BOHR

Bettor Is Best?

Will markets for prediction be any better at guessing the future than 'experts'? Can they be manipulated?

What will be, will be, but people want to see tomorrow, today. Our curiosity birthed oracles, astrologers, crystal gazers, and their analogues. When superstition became unfashionable, "experts" took over. And they could be spectacularly inaccurate, too: days before the 1929 Wall St crash, celebrated economist Irving Fisher predicted this: stocks will be at a "permanently high plateau". Can "prediction markets" do better? If you haven't followed their rise, these markets are a new kind of "aggregator". Only, instead of connecting riders with drivers, they aggregate answers to questions. Any kind of question, even "when will Khamenei die?"

No, seriously, that question was asked, and somebody made half a million dollars, by getting the answer right in a prediction market. On Kalshi, the largest US prediction market, questions about the likely timing of US-Iran nuclear deal, opening of Hormuz Strait, and US tariff on China by July 1, were trending yesterday. Which is understandable – tariffs and energy affect economies, and people's lives. But what if someone with inside knowledge – exact dates and rates – places a bet, and walks away with the payout? The winning bet about Khamenei's death isn't the only ground for this fear. Some bettors got the timing of Trump's Venezuela op right. Most recently, traders bet $500mn on the price of crude, 15 minutes before Trump announced he was delaying attacks on Iran's energy infra by five days. That happened in the commodities market, but the point is inside knowledge.

It's a big concern, but not the biggest. Profiting from classified information is certainly unethical, in fact criminal, but when these markets are billed as modern oracles, the bigger fear is deliberate distortion. Say, the question is whether candidate A or candidate B will win an election. A rich person, or a foreign govt, can influence the market's predictions, by placing more bets. Now, when some American news networks have started including these predictions in their coverage, the risk of manipulation is very real. So, why have prediction markets at all, when they are wrong so often? One platform predicted, US would add 60,000 jobs in Feb, but that month 90,000 jobs were lost. How can ordinary folks, betting on their gut feel, see the future? Kalshi co-founder Luana Lopes Lara thinks they can. When people place bets, they want to be right, she says. And to be right, they research. Millions of people researching and processing information, and together arriving at one prediction, has oracular potential. Really? We will know the answer to that once the prediction market matures.

Count Us In

Census must not record live-in couples as 'married'. It defeats the purpose of capturing social changes

If a govt doesn't measure x, does x not exist? Furthermore, what are the implications of govt refusing to measure x? Census 2027 will be recording live-in couples, who are staying in a household in a "stable union", as married couples. This means that 0 data on how many Indians are choosing live-in relationships, will continue to be 0. Such wilful unseeing, obviously, enfeebles Census. It should be capturing cultural shifts, instead of rubbing out their existence. Remember, such eraser acts can't kill any cultural momentum. What they obstruct, instead, is policymakers' ability to constructively address how a society is transforming.

US census shows that, among those aged 18-24, live-ins are now more popular than marriage. UK census shows the proportion of people who live as a "cohabiting" couple is up to 24%. Nobody is making the case that the phenomenon is as pervasive in India. What we are certain of, though, is that it exists, it's growing, and not just in metro cities. This much, journalists can find out and report. But a comprehensive enumeration, only a census can do.

There are countless reasons Indians have become interested in live-in relationships. Consider, in no particular order of importance, how expensive weddings are, how a more equal kind of love can need a more equal kind of partnership, how this relationship vibes like an intentional daily choice, rather than an obligatory social contract, how it can feel more free. It can also, of course, draw a lot of social animus. Never mind that Supreme Court has found it protected under the right to life and liberty. Hostilities are animated by the idea that this is not 'Indian culture'. But culture never is, never has been, a static thing. It's constantly changing. Indian mythology certainly suggests that, once upon a time, we were much less puritanical.

Revenge, the main act

It's a blockbuster, at the movies and at home

Anil Abraham

"Everyone else has watched it. Except us," Kamala declared angrily. I thought she was talking about Trump's confusing press conferences. But the missus was having mid-life FOMO about something more predictable: *Dhurandhar 2 – The Revenge*.

All the word-of-mouth publicity is propelling the movie to delirious box-office heights. Akshaye Khanna's swag entry in the first installment to a Flipperachi song, has been rapidly replaced by new villains and music. Rakesh Bedi, who was last seen by the Boomers in 1981 with *Chashme Buddoor*, and who more recently made a spectacle of himself in *Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah*, now has a kamaal come-back as Jamaal-i for Gen Alpha. *Bachcha hai tu mera* – every star parent in Bollywood is now claiming his iconic line, to promote their nepo kid, while brands are jumping onto the bandwagon, to sell random products from popcorn to propaganda.

I informed Kamala that the movie lasts almost 4 hours. She replied, "You have to wait in a longer queue for a cylinder, than be seated watching *Dhurandhar*!" I surrendered to her impeccable logic, and booked the tickets online, paying premium rates – unlike those MLAs in Karnataka who wanted free tickets to IPL matches. After all, VIPs never need to stand in a queue with the common man – whether it be for matches, movies, or even to collect money from an ATM. Cylinders reach them with ease – whether oxygen or LPG – because the fact is that they are entitled to special privileges.

But nobody can separate facts from fiction anymore. Certainly not in a film that begins with a long disclaimer that it is a work of fiction – but is based on true events. Leaving the field wide open for interpretation, plus for peak detailing by the director. Some unnecessary details were added by AI too, to posters, proving that "Smoking is Injurious to Health" and Harmony. Just as Hamza Ali Mazari can morph seamlessly into a Jaskirat Singh Rangi, patriotism can subtly be substituted with jingoism, while a delirious audience dances in the aisles. As for the young lady in both part 1 and part 2, she serves to underline the fact that Sara Jahan se Achcha. And finally, Kamala also got her revenge – I might claim to be Bade Sahab in public, but she is the Domestic Dhurandhar, who frowns if I even talk to the neighbours!

GULF WITHIN GULF

US security umbrella has put the region in Iran's crosshairs, even as US has diverted air defences from these Arab nations to Israel. But monarchies' responses to this strategic tough spot are very different, from Saudi and UAE to Oman and Kuwait

Steven Sahiounie

Columnist based in Latakia, Syria

As US and Israel's war continues against Iran, Gulf countries are really suffering. So dire has their security situation become, that there are leaked reports of Gulf officials pondering military action against Iran, and these have to be taken seriously.

How can a region full of US military bases, personnel and hardware, be so vulnerable to Iran's attacks? US choices over the past couple of years, have directly brought us to this pass.

From Oct 2024, and through 2025, US began actively redeploying air defence systems, specifically the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) and Patriot batteries, from Gulf nations – shifting these to Israel, following the escalation between Israel and Iran.

In Oct 2024, Biden ordered a THAAD battery and its crew to be moved to Israel. In July 2025, US asked Saudi Arabia to send its missile interceptors to Israel. By Aug 2025, US had redeployed a THAAD battery previously stationed in Abu Dhabi (UAE) to Israel. In Aug 2025, Israel hosted up to six THAAD batteries drawn from the American global pool. That month, a Saudi official said, "US abandoned us and redirected its air defence to protect Israel."

Indeed, these relocations represented a major strategic shift. The concentration of US air defences in Israel was, after all, taking place amid dwindling US interceptor supplies. Ahead of the Feb 28 Iran attack, these relocations left all the Gulf states that host American bases at risk. And, of course, there were complaints from regional allies, such as Saudi Arabia, that US was prioritising Israeli security over Gulf state defences.

Saudi Arabia spends a great deal on defence, with most defence materials purchased from US, in an agreement where Saudi petrodollars are forced into the American economy, even if this means buying inferiorly made weapons, at top prices.

Saudi Arabia avoids purchasing major Russian air defence systems (like the S-400), to avoid US sanctions under CAATSA, avoid damaging their strategic military alliance with Washington, and to ensure defence systems are interoperable with existing Western technologies.

Several Gulf countries, particularly those that normalised relations through the Abraham Accords, also purchase defence materials from Israel. UAE has signed a $2.3bn deal for Israeli Elbit Systems defence tech. It also fields batteries of two different Israeli and one South Korean medium-range SAM systems.

Until this March, US bases in the Gulf gave an illusion of security to those oil-rich countries that paid for these. Gulf monarchies saw the bases as an insurance policy, but those insurance payments have turned out to be worthless. With Iran's attacks damaging their oil & gas infra, and Hormuz Strait closed for shipping their oil & gas, Gulf countries must accept responsibility for their own decisions. They trusted the wrong partner for their security.

Image: AI

Iran is hitting the Gulf because they house thousands of American troops, who are actively killing, maiming, and destroying parts of Iran. In this sense, Gulf countries are active participants in the war against Iran. But they neither initiated this war, nor control it, and their vulnerability to it has increased, because key air defence systems went to reinforce Israel. It is no wonder, then, that even as Gulf govts continue to project unity, their internal calculations reveal a far more fragmented picture.

Saudi Arabia, under Mohammed bin Salman, appears to be navigating this moment with caution. Riyadh sees strategic value in sustained pressure on Iran, yet remains deeply reluctant to be drawn into direct confrontation. Its preference is clear: a weakened Iran achieved externally, without exposing the kingdom to escalation, or the consequences of a potentially inconsistent US commitment.

UAE has taken a somewhat firmer line. With growing defence ties with Israel, Abu Dhabi has shown greater openness to collective military measures, particularly those aimed at safeguarding maritime routes. It appears more willing than its neighbours to accept the risks of a prolonged confrontation with Iran, if it produces a decisive shift in the regional balance.

For ***Bahrain***, the situation is less about choice than exposure. Hosting the US Fifth Fleet, it sits on the frontline of any escalation, and remains heavily dependent on American protection. Its alignment with Washington reflects structural necessity, rather than strategic autonomy.

At the other end of the spectrum, ***Oman*** continues to emphasise de-escalation. With long-standing channels to Tehran, Muscat views the conflict as a destabilising rupture rather than an opportunity. Its priority remains preserving diplomatic pathways and preventing further regional fragmentation.

Between these poles sit Qatar and Kuwait. ***Qatar*** balances its role as host to a major US military presence with its pragmatic ties to Iran, positioning itself as a potential intermediary. ***Kuwait***, shaped by domestic political sensitivities and a cautious foreign policy tradition, has leaned towards restraint, focusing on limiting spillover and maintaining internal stability.

Across the region, a common pattern emerges. Gulf states are attempting to balance three parallel imperatives: avoiding direct military involvement, strengthening defensive and security coordination (often still with US), and keeping channels open to de-escalate tensions with Iran.

The result is not a unified strategy but a spectrum of risk tolerance. UAE leans towards a more assertive posture, Saudi Arabia offers conditional support from a distance, Bahrain remains tightly aligned but vulnerable, Oman prioritises diplomacy, while Qatar and Kuwait hedge between these positions.

What ultimately unites them is a deeper unease. Gulf states now find themselves on the frontline of a confrontation driven by external powers, while facing the possibility that those same powers may not remain indefinitely committed. In that uncertainty, lies the region's greatest strategic concern.

How Maoism Lost The Battle & What'll Keep It Down

March 31 deadline arrives with Naxalism all but wiped out. Smart security ops are one reason. But so is govt outreach in once-forgotten areas. Deepening that is the best guarantee against a revival of extremism

Sanjay Kumar Jha

When Amit Shah set March 31 as the target to eliminate Naxalism, it signalled a moment of unusual confidence in India's long battle against leftwing extremism. Yet, the story of its decline is less about a single deadline, and more about a slow, uneven recalibration of state strategy – one that has steadily narrowed both the geography, and the intensity, of the conflict.

If India is, indeed, approaching the end of Naxalism as we have known it, the more important question is not just how it was contained, but what this transformation reveals about the changing nature of state power, governance, and conflict.

Naxalism once affected nearly 200 districts, known as the 'Red Corridor'. It thrived in regions marked by state absence, tribal alienation, economic neglect. For years, the Indian state oscillated between heavy-handed crackdowns, and uneven development responses, neither of which proved sufficient.

The past decade, however, marked a decisive shift. Number of affected districts has fallen from 126 in 2014, to just 11 in 2025, with the most severely impacted areas now limited to a few districts in Chhattisgarh. Violence has declined significantly, with sharp reductions in both civilian casualties, and security force deaths.

This contraction is no accident. It reflects a sustained, multi-layered GOI strategy – one that combines force with outreach, coercion with integration. In several formerly affected regions, elections have recorded higher voter turnouts, and fewer disruptions, with polling reaching villages once considered inaccessible. Weekly markets have reopened, road connectivity has improved, local festivals, and sporting events are gradually returning.

Part of this shift can be traced to sustained pressure on Maoist leadership, and cadre base. Arrests, surrenders, and targeted operations have steadily weakened organisational structures, while loss of senior leaders has disrupted continuity within the movement.

The killing of CPI (Maoist) general secretary Nambala Keshava Rao, better known as Basavaraju, marked a significant blow to the group's central command. This followed the neutralisation of key leaders such as Patiram Manjhi and Ganesh Uike, both of whom operated in core areas of influence. Each such loss has chipped away at the movement's ability to coordinate across regions.

At the same time, a steady stream of surrenders points to a deeper churn within Naxal ranks. In Telangana, the surrender of a senior leader, Devuji, was seen as emblematic of a broader weakening of Maoist networks. Similar patterns have been visible in parts of Chhattisgarh, where multiple cadres have laid down arms in recent months.

In Odisha, a top Maoist operative, Sukru, surrendered, along with four cadres, in Kandhamal district – less than a month after reportedly killing his deputy, over disagreements on whether to lay down arms. In neighbouring Chhattisgarh, Papa Rao, believed to be among the last active Maoist commanders in the Bastar region, surrendered with 17 cadres in Bijapur. A senior functionary of the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee, he carried a reward of ₹25L, underscoring both his prominence, and the scale of the organisational setback.

These developments suggest more than just tactical setbacks. When leadership thins, and exits become more frequent, internal cohesion begins to fray. Recruitment becomes harder, communication more fragmented, and the sense of inevitability, which sustains such movements, begins to fade. But, such outcomes are rarely irreversible. Leadership gaps can be filled, and dormant networks can reconfigure, if underlying conditions persist.

What distinguishes the current phase, is the extent to which security operations have been accompanied by development initiatives. Under Modi govt, infra expansion – roads, telecom connectivity, banking access – have begun to alter the physical and economic landscape of previously isolated regions.

GOI programmes aimed at tribal welfare, skill development, and local infra, have attempted to bridge long-standing gaps that allowed insurgency to take root. In many areas, the state is more visible today than a decade ago. Expansion of schools, mobile networks, and banking access points, has also meant that everyday transactions – from receiving welfare benefits to accessing markets – are less constrained by distance and disruption.

India does appear closer than ever to ending Naxalism as a widespread insurgency. That is no small achievement. It reflects policy continuity, coordination between Centre and states, and a willingness to recalibrate strategy over time. It also underscores the importance of aligning security measures with development interventions.

But the deeper lesson is, conflicts rooted in inequality and exclusion cannot be resolved by force alone. They require a reworking of the relationship between the state and its most marginalised citizens.

As the Red Corridor shrinks, focus now shifts to consolidation. Ending an insurgency is one milestone; ensuring it doesn't return is another. Whether this moment marks a definitive end – or merely a pause – will depend on how deeply the state can sustain its presence, in areas it was once absent.

The writer is a former Director General of Police, Madhya Pradesh

Calvin & Hobbes

Sacred*space*

All breathing, existing, living, sentient creatures should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor driven away.

Mahavir

There Is No Gender Bias In Mahavir's Teachings

Ashok Vohra

Jainism is one of the oldest religions of the world. According to it, every living being is a soul and has the potentiality of attaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Mahavir, the twenty-fourth Tirthankar of Jainism, treated men and women equally. There is no gender bias in his teachings. However, he realised that men and women are different because of gender, therefore, he created different gender-based *aachar* – code of conduct, but treated both as equals.

Among Asian religions, Jainism is the only religion that avows that women are as much entitled to emancipation – kaivalya, moksh, or nirvan, as men are. Though there is complete agreement between the two sects of Jainism, namely, Digambar, sky clad, and Shvetambar, white cloth clad, regarding teachings and prescribed rules of conduct such as ahimsa, satya, aprigrah, asteya, and brahmacharya, they disagree with the spiritual equality of men and women.

They agree that irrespective of the gender of the body which a soul inhabits, there is spiritual equality of all jivas, souls, and their perfection is the aim of Jainism. Digambar sect argues that women cannot achieve liberation on the following grounds. First, the prerequisite of attaining liberation is complete renunciation or abandonment and non-possession of all material goods, including clothing. Only those who can achieve this absolute level of renunciation can attain liberation.

According to them, digambaratv, 'sky cladness', is a non-negotiable condition of renunciation or aprigrah. It is a must for leading an ascetic life. Since women, because of their physiological limitations, societal and practical constraints, cannot be totally detached from all possessions and worldly bonds, and lead an ascetic life; liberation is impossible for them. One must be reborn as a man.

Second, women have a disposition to feel ashamed. This susceptibility comes in the way of their path to emancipation, as it prevents the necessary, perfect renunciation of shame. Third, the nature of a female body is inherently hinsak – violent, as it naturally kills many microbes during menstrual cycles. This violates the strict doctrine of nonviolence required for liberation. Fourth, they uphold that the female body is a result of specific inferior karmas and, therefore, incapable of reaching the tenth to fourteenth gunsthanas – stages of spiritual purification.

However, from these arguments, one should not infer that Digambars consider women's souls as inferior to those of males. They do believe in the equality of all souls. Between souls, there is no hierarchy. The restriction on the attainment of liberation is based on physical and social considerations alone.

Shvetambars reject the arguments of Digambars on the ground that Right faith, Right knowledge, and Right conduct are key conditions for attaining liberation. Digambars commit the error of confusing the essentials and peripherals. They argue that wearing clothes is a means, just like food, and does not imply attachment.

According to them, Digambars take the meaning of the notions of renunciation, attachment in a literal sense and not in the metaphorical sense. They cite the example of nineteenth Jina Mallinath, who was a woman and attained emancipation as a woman. However, Digambars counter Shvetambars by saying that Mallinatha gained enlightenment only after he was reborn as a male.

The writer is a former professor of philosophy, Delhi University

THE SPEAKING TREE

Gold and silver are down: Should you now buy, hold or exit?

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For investors seeking refuge amid global turmoil, the usual hiding places are no longer safe. The 'safe-haven' assets that shielded investors for the past 18-odd months are now wilting as the US and Israel's war against Iran intensifies. In fact, both precious metals have fallen more than equities.

Nippon India ETF Gold BeES, the country's largest-traded gold ETF (exchange-traded fund), has shed 15% since March 2, even as the Nippon India Silver ETF has lost 23%. Comparatively, the BSE Sensex has fallen 8% until March 27. After this latest fall, the corrections in gold and silver from their Jan 29 peaks now extend to 20% and 40%, respectively. Have the precious metals lost their charm? Or is this correction an opportunity to invest more?

Weak Macros Impact Appeal

Gold and silver saw a spectacular rally in 2024 and 2025, helping shield investor portfolios from market dislocations triggered by tariff wars and regional conflicts. Both precious metals initially seemed to benefit from the rising "geopolitical risk premium" embedded in their prices. Eventually, speculative and momentum-driven flows drove the two to dizzying heights.

But now, with geopolitical tensions intensifying further, the script has flipped. Both gold and silver have buckled under the mounting stress, marking a behavioural shift from the traditional pattern in which safe-haven assets tend to rally during turmoil.

To be sure, the geopolitical risk premium has not faded away. But emerging macro conditions are now proving to be a bitter pill, along with the liquidation of hot money. Specifically, the US Treasury yield is now weighing on gold and silver prices. As the conflict in West Asia rages on, disruptions to oil supplies have pushed oil prices higher.

This has stoked inflation concerns, prompting markets to reassess expectations for rate cuts, which has resulted in a spike in US Treasury yields as well as pushed the dollar higher. Both are negative for gold and silver. Higher bond yields increase the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding assets. When 10-year US Treasuries start yielding 4-5% risk-free, money flows reallocate immediately. In simple words, when bond yields rise and the dollar strengthens, money moves away from gold and silver, which pay no interest or dividends.

No escape from global tensions

Safe havens not immune to flare-up

WHAT UPSET PRECIOUS METALS
- War-led disruption sent oil, energy prices soaring
- Inflation fears led to markets reassessing rate cuts
- Higher US Treasury yields, stronger dollar weaken safe haven appeal
- Money flows shifted away from non-yielding assets

NO LONGER SAFE HAVENS?
- Gold's low correlation with markets works in long term
- But this can break in times of extreme stress
- After recent sharp run-up, mean reversion was expected
- Gold retains role of diversifier, silver remains a tactical call

Further, profitable positions in precious metals get liquidated as market players rush to meet margin calls. Siddharth Srivastava, head-ETF product & fund manager, Mirae Asset Investment Managers (India), says, "While geopolitical developments typically support safe-haven demand, the recent event appears to have triggered near-term unwinding in gold positions, likely driven by liquidity needs and asset rotation."

That is why the usual low correlation of gold with equity markets has broken down. N S Ramaswamy, head of commodity, Ventura, says, "Gold is facing an unusual dynamic. It is benefiting from fear of the geopolitical tensions but suffers from the economic ramifications of that same fear."

We All Fall Down

Both gold and silver are typically used as diversifiers in investors' portfolios. Their low correlation with equities often provides a buffer against market volatility. Now, if the portfolio diversifiers are not immune to extreme uncertainty, does the asset allocation argument fall apart? Experts maintain that

Gold and silver are typically diversifiers in investors' portfolios. Their low correlation with equities helps buffer against market volatility

the breakdown in this correlation does not necessarily mean that gold and silver have lost their safe-haven status.

Anish Teli, managing partner at QED Capital Advisors, insists that gold shows low correlation in the long term, but not during extreme stress. "Usually, gold is a safe haven during economic stress, but the context matters — how bad the stress is and what is driving that stress."

Karan Aggarwal, co-founder & CIO, Ametra PMS, points out that war and geopolitical risk were already priced into valuations of precious metals. "We are in a cooling-off phase where gold and silver are looking at a liquidation cycle to create space for the next leg of the rally," he observes. He adds that news flow can create short-term disruption, but long-term pricing trends always respect the fundamentals. Srivastava says, "For gold, this seems to be a correction amplified by profit-booking post its historical run-up. Going forward, while return expectations may moderate, gold will continue to present a reasonable investment case at current levels, particularly as a portfolio diversifier."

How to invest in gold and silver

- Investors can buy financial gold and silver in the form of gold ETFs and silver ETFs. These are listed on exchanges and are traded like stocks. You need a demat account and trading account to invest in these. These are backed by physical gold and silver. For instance, one gold ETF unit is equal to 1 gram of gold and is backed by 99.5% pure physical gold bars. Gold fund of funds (FoFs) and silver FoFs allow you to invest in gold or silver ETFs like any other mutual fund scheme, without requiring a demat and trading account. These also let you set up SIPs
- Sovereign gold bonds (SGB) have now been discontinued, and can only be bought on exchanges. Physical gold remains an option for Indian households, but comes with storage risk, making charges and 3% GST on purchase

What Investors Should Do Now?

The correction is a reality check for investors in gold, silver ETFs and funds. All market-linked investments whose prices fluctuate tend to come back to historical averages. The same holds true for stock markets and also for gold and silver prices. Gold and silver are currently going through such a phase.

Existing investors must remain calm and not lose faith in asset allocation. Experts favour gold ahead of silver, but neither is cheap even after the correction.

Srivastava insists, "At current levels, investors may look at adding gold and silver to their portfolio in a staggered manner, though gold looks relatively attractive on a risk-reward basis."

Sahil Kapoor, head of product and market strategist at DSP Mutual Fund, asserts, "Most investors are better off only in gold." Kapoor advises that investors continue systematic investment plans in gold, but not silver, as it is not a monetary asset.

INCOME TAX ACT 2025

New tax rules: What changes for you

Multiple exemption limits set to go up

Provisions	Current exemption limits	After April 1, 2026	Applicability
House rent allowance	50% of basic pay in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai; 40% in other cities	Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Ahmedabad too eligible for 50% relief	Old regime
Children's education fees	₹100 per child per month*	₹3,000 per child per month*	Old regime
Hostel expenses	₹300 per child per month*	₹9,000 per child per month*	Old regime
Value of gifts from employers	₹5,000 a year	₹15,000 a year	Both regimes

Source: Deloitte India, ET Wealth research. Enhanced exemptions' list is not exhaustive. *Maximum up to 2 kids.

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This April 1 will mark more than the start of the new financial year — it will usher in a revamped tax landscape, with the Income Tax Act, 2025 and the Income Tax Rules, 2026 coming into force.

The new I-T rules have hiked the tax-exemption limits for a host of allowances, bringing the old tax regime back into focus, after the new regime had gained a clear upper hand in fiscal 2025-26. However, salaried taxpayers must calculate their tax outgo under both regimes before making a choice.

For instance, ClearTax estimates show that for those earning over Rs 25 lakh and not claiming house rent allowance (HRA), the old regime offers only a marginal benefit of Rs 21,000-Rs 25,000 over the new regime.

This, after taking into account the newly enhanced tax-exempt limits on children's education as well as hostel allowances for two kids (amounting to Rs 2.88 lakh a year) and 44 meals per month at Rs 200 per meal (Rs 1,05,600 a year). The calculations assume complete utilisation of other tax benefits too: tax-saver investments (Rs 1.5 lakh), health insurance premiums (total Rs 75,000 for self and parents), home loan interest (Rs 2 lakh) and National Pension System (NPS) contribution of Rs 50,000.

HRA Remains The Needle-Mover

High-earners without HRA, therefore, must bear in mind that exhausting all tax sops under the old regime could yield modest savings, but compliance requirements will go up too. There is a view that meal benefits may be exempt under both regimes under the new rules, unlike now where they qualify only under the old regime.

"It is quite certain that meal benefits (up to Rs 200 per meal) offered by employers will be exempt under both regimes. If the new I-T Rules intended to restrict this to the old regime, they would have stated so explicitly, as in the current rules in force until March 31, 2026," says Ashish Karundia, founder of chartered accountancy firm Ashish Karundia & Co.

For taxpayers claiming HRA, tax savings under the old regime will be significantly higher, especially in cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune and Ahmedabad. They will now be eligible for an exemption of up to 50% of basic salary, up from 40%. HRA is a key benefit that can tilt the choice towards the old regime.

"For considering the old tax regime without claiming HRA, the other exemptions must be large enough (over Rs 8 lakh) to compensate for the slab rate benefit under the new regime," says Sonu Iyer, national leader and partner, People Advisory Services-Tax, EY LLP.

Perks Depend On Firm Policies

According to staffing solutions firm Teamlease, only 10-15% of employers offer such allowances currently.

"The prevalence is significantly higher in public sector undertakings, legacy organisations and large manufacturing companies. New-age sectors such as technology, startups and e-commerce, typically prefer flexible pay structures with fewer allowance categories, often consolidating them into broader salary components," says Balasubramanian A, senior vice president, Teamlease Services.

The proportion of taxpayers utilising such exemptions is also low at 10%, according to ClearTax.

"Historically, the exemption limits were just too low (Rs 100 a month for education, for instance) to justify the administrative hassle of tracking and submitting receipts," explains Archit Gupta, founder and CEO, ClearTax.

He expects companies to start restructuring their cost-to-company packages to accommodate the exemptions.

But recruitment consultants say a sudden rush to rejig pay structures post April 1 is unlikely.

Finally, should you decide to exhaust all the exempt allowances, if offered, you ought to be prepared for meticulous record keeping, given that many salaried taxpayers have received notices seeking proof of deductions claimed in recent years.

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ASK THE EXPERTS

My son is a foreign citizen. I would like to gift him all my gold jewellery. What are the tax implications of this? — *Rani Deshpande*

You can execute a gift deed in favour of your son, listing the jewellery items along with detailed valuation specifications, purchase invoices, and, ideally, photographs of each item to create a comprehensive record. It's optional but would be useful to include descriptions such as weight, purity, and distinguishing features, as this strengthens documentation. Gifts to blood relatives in India are tax-free, so this transfer will not attract any tax liability in India. However, your son should carry a customs declaration when taking the jewellery abroad and retain all supporting documents, including the gift deed, invoices, and valuation details, for any queries by authorities. Additionally, it is important to check the applicable laws in his country of residence regarding declaration requirements, import duties, and taxation, as these can vary significantly.

Shubham Agrawal
Senior taxation adviser, TaxFile.in

I am an NRI in the USA paying tax there. Is NRE interest tax-free? I want to know if tax slabs and rebates differ for NRIs, and whether long- and short-term capital gains from shares in a demat account linked to my NRE account are taxed the same as for residents.
— *Anwesha Bhattacharyaa*

For an NRI, interest on an NRE rupee account is fully exempt from tax in India as long as the non-resident status continues. Though exempt, it is advisable to disclose it as exempt income in the return. Interest on an NRO account is taxable. NRIs cannot use ITR-1. There is no separate ITR form for NRIs; typically, ITR-2 is applicable (ITR-3, if there is business/professional income). Tax slabs are the same as for residents, but rebates under section 87A and senior citizen benefits are not available to NRIs. Capital gains on shares are taxed the same as residents — 20% for STCG and 12.5% for LTCG (above Rs 1.25 lakh) — but TDS is automatically deducted at source for NRIs.

Umesh Kumar Jethani
Founder, ApkiReturn

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Don't Outsource Your Brain To AI.

It'll Kill Critical Thinking & Creativity

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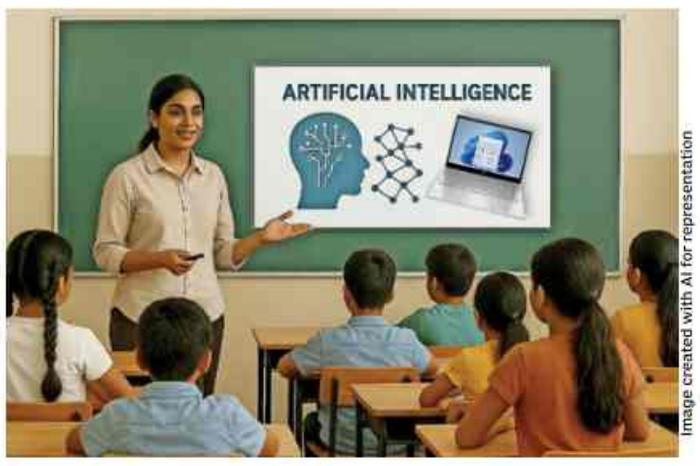

Image created with AI for representation

OpenAI presents ChatGPT as an all-purpose aide, specifically for students, highlighting prompts to turn flashcards into stories, convert biology notes into talk show scripts, or coach students on public speaking for in-class presentations. The pitch is simple: with generative AI, learning is a cakewalk.

Students, however, were already ahead of the campaign. In Gurugram, 14-year-old Sachi Aggarwal started using generative AI platforms like Claude, Perplexity and ChatGPT last year to speed up research, brainstorm ideas and complete homework. Her peers at The Shri Ram School, Aravali, did the same. However, what began as light assistance turned into full-scale offloading. "Students weren't using AI as a last resort any more," says Sachi. "It became their first option."

Finding it hard to balance coursework, extracurriculars, tuition classes, exam prep, Model UNs, and community service – often pursued for college applications abroad – many students capitulated to the easy appeal of AI. Sachi admits she used AI so frequently that it felt she wasn't thinking for myself anymore. "My thought process became robotic, and I was no longer framing answers the way I originally did, using my own creativity and perspective, because I grew accustomed to the AI's way of formulating answers," she says. The tipping point came when her English teacher asked her to explain an analysis she'd submitted — and she went blank because AI had done the thinking for her.

AI Or You?

Generative AI is promoted as an enabler and pathfinder, a tool that builds on human logic and creativity to prompt new ideas and forms of expression. Critics call it the death knell of critical thinking and creativity.

A recent, MIT Media Lab study, Your Brain on ChatGPT, found that users who relied on ChatGPT to write essays consistently underperformed neurologically, linguistically, and behaviourally when compared to those who only used Google or no tools at all, with the latter outperforming the rest. The study was criticised for its small sample size (54 participants aged 18–39) and lack of peer review, but lead author Nataliya Kosmyna told Time the findings were released early out of concern over the rapid rollout of LLMs without thorough evaluation, and the speed with which they had entered mainstream use. She warned that long-term brain development could be affected, especially in young people, who are the biggest adopters of generative AI apps.

Over half of ChatGPT users in India are under 24, who use the app mainly to study. Neurologist Dr Sid Warrier says the use of this technology can fly both ways. On the upside, says the Mumbai-based doctor: "Someone growing up with AI may have a better ability to harness it, rather than if they were exposed to it later in life." On the downside: "If (at an early age) you outsource your core critical thinking skills, why would your brain bother to develop those skills at all? For instance, we stopped remembering phone numbers when we had phones to store them."

This 'cognitive offloading' — delegating mental work to notes or to devices — can upend daily life with a growing inability to focus, analyse, reason, reflect and question. "That is the real danger, because we're talking about our core purpose as human beings," Dr Warrier points out.

Young people develop these skills gradually, shaped through what they learn and experience. "And if those cognitive stimuli are unidimensional or restrictive, it could affect brain development impacting, among other things, creativity and memory," says Dr Rajesh Sagar, professor of psychiatry at AIIMS, Delhi. "The brains of young people are neuroplastic— they're still developing; what they do or see during the developing years will affect their neuroplasticity, and its implications will be felt later in adulthood. Adults, on the other hand, have already reached developmental maturity." Yet today's adults were yesterday's teens raised on multiple tabs, who know a thing or two about shrinking attention spans, even if they engage with LLMs less than teens do today.

Lessons From Social Media

Mainstream use of LLMs may be new, but social media offers an indication, as its effect on young people was already well researched.

"We have not yet reached the stage where cognitive decline is evident in society because there's usually a lag between the availability of a service and its effects," explains Dr Warrier. "But we can reasonably predict the direction we're headed as a society."

A study published in Nature in 2024, on the long-term impact of digital media on brain development in children, found that "social media users often contend with constant distractions, which can significantly impact their behaviour, leading to inattention symptoms. Additionally, these users can become easily diverted from tasks like reading or homework, etc."

Social media incentivises quick, superficial interactions, with bite-sized content meant to skim rather than sink in. It triggers and rewards immediate emotional reactions rather than deep reflection and analysis. Predictably, attention deficit is a major concern reported by psychologists who treat kids with tech addiction — it impacts memory and can lead to learning difficulties. And since cognitive skills and mental health are symbiotic, one impacts the other. "Emotions are the brain's instinctive response to stress. Cognitive skills are what help us deal with our emotions effectively," says Dr Warrier. "Without these skills, emotions overrule rationality and lead to poor decision-making, which can in turn impact mental health."

AI For Education

AI is already entering classrooms. In August, OpenAI launched its Learning Accelerator in India "to bring advanced AI to India's educators and learners nationwide through AI research, training, and deployment." It plans to distribute 500,000 ChatGPT licences to students and educators, including those in govt schools.

Some schools are far ahead of this, as AI is already teaching Rabindranath Tagore and quadratic equations. Indus International, an IB school with campuses in Pune, Bengaluru and Hyderabad, introduced an AI-driven humanoid as a supplementary teacher in 2019. "This humanoid helps deliver content and handles routine instructional tasks, allowing teachers to focus on more meaningful and emotionally supportive interactions with their students... cultivating ethics, building character, and developing entrepreneurial competencies," Akshaya KB, head of curriculum, wrote in an email. Their Collaborative Learning Model, as it's called, began with the humanoid teaching pre-programmed lessons, later progressed to semi-programmed lessons with basic generative AI and now works with full conversational generative AI. The school claims this has improved average student performance by 15% every year.

Developing Protocols

As LLMs evolve, so do efforts to guide their use. ChatGPT-5's Study Mode is designed to encourage learning by guiding students step by step through an answer, instead of providing complete answers. The benefits cannot be denied — personalised learning, clearer explanations, tailored feedback — but without strong protocols, risks over its ethical use and privacy remain.

Several countries have developed AI frameworks. The European Commission and OECD, for example, have drafted an AI Literacy Framework that "ensures students know how to evaluate, question, and apply AI responsibly in their academic lives."

In India, equitable access is an additional concern. Osama Manzar, founder of the Digital Empowerment Foundation, warns that intense focus on AI and digital tools in education could marginalise students in areas that lack proper digital infrastructure. "While the National Education Policy emphasises inclusivity, the emphasis on digital education could undermine the quality of teaching in schools, especially if teachers are not adequately trained to use digital tools effectively. This can also lead to a one-size-fits-all approach, ignoring local needs and educational contexts."

Raju Kendre, founder of Eklavya Foundation — a nonprofit that empowers students from marginalised communities to access higher education — highlights another concern: "Current LLMs often carry the biases of their makers who come from mainstream, urban high socio-economic backgrounds. Without diversity, elite perspectives risk perpetuating stereotypes," he cautions. This can affect the way marginalised communities view themselves and their cultures through the monocular lens of AI. He has suggested that India should build its own AI models and the govt must use policy and oversight to correct biases and ensure that AI serves everyone.

GUIDELINES

For Schools:

1. Insist on a disclosure/process note for any substantial AI help. Ultimately, a student's work must remain authentic.
2. Teach students how to acknowledge AI properly and set clear dos/don'ts for use cases, in subject guides and task sheets.
3. Design for assessment integrity by prioritising in-class writing and hands-on STEAM tasks that affirm conceptual understanding.
4. Support ongoing teacher development on generative AI pedagogy and academic integrity norms.

For Parents:

1. Create a family AI agreement (define the tools, time and extent of use, and how to acknowledge AI assistance).
2. Review the child's process notes (how AI was used) more than the final product; praise authentic effort and revision.
3. Focus on building relationships and experiences, watch for emotional outsourcing to chatbots and route wellbeing to teachers/ counsellors.

(Compiled from Indus International's AI policy recommendations)

Even as larger questions of access, accountability and cognitive trade-offs are being threshed out in policy, school and psychology circles, students are negotiating their own boundaries.

After her analysis debacle, Sachi now only uses AI to study, not as an assignment aide. "I had ChatGPT use the Feynman technique to help me learn about India's Election Commission," she says. Better time management is what has helped her stay on the course. "I write down my priorities, and I approach school assignments with a different mindset. Earlier, my attitude was: 'I'm not going to look at this assignment in 10 years, so why bother?' Now I know it all adds up."

MIT Media Lab preprint study: Your Brain on ChatGPT (https://arxiv.org/abs/2506.08872)
Nature study: Long-term impact of digital media on brain development in children (https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-63566-y)
European Commission and OECD: AI Literacy Framework: (https://ailiteracyframework.org/)

Court rebukes Rajasthan over transgender quota policy

▶ Continued from page 1

A division bench comprising Justices Arun Monga and Yogendra Kumar Purohit was hearing a writ petition filed by Ganga Kumari, who had sought quashing of a Jan 2023 govt notification, which classified transgenders under the OBC category, and demanded horizontal reservation in public services in line with the NALSA judgment.

The bench sharply rebuked the state govt, underscoring the disadvantage forced upon transgender individuals from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes due to the blanket OBC classification. "The State of Rajasthan was under a clear constitutional obligation to translate the mandate of the Supreme Court into tangible policy by carving out a distinct and effective reservation framework for transgender persons. That obligation has been conspicuously abdicated. The impugned circular, far from advancing rights, reduces a binding constitutional directive to an empty ritual," it said.

Adding an epilogue to the judgment, Justice Monga stated that the bench, while writing its judgment, proceeded on the foundational premise established by SC in the NALSA ruling "that the right to self-identify one's gender is an intrinsic facet of dignity, autonomy, and personal liberty. These rights are protected under Articles 14, 15, 16, and 21 of the Constitution".

"It is now proposed that legal recognition of gender identity shall be conditioned upon certification, scrutiny, or other forms of administrative endorsement.

"What was recognised by the Supreme Court as an inviolable aspect of personhood now risks being reduced to a contingent, State-mediated entitlement," remarked Justice Monga, adding, "The state must be mindful that statutory developments cannot be implemented in a manner that dilutes constitutional guarantees."

Teachers recall Mehta's early leadership traits

▶ Continued from page 1

Nisha Mehta had a natural ability to coordinate and represent, reflecting leadership qualities even then," she said, though noting that Mehta was not politically active during her student years.

Former institute principal Dr Manju Vatsa remembers the student differently — quieter, reserved, but remarkable. "She was a very serious and highly intelligent student, efficient in her work and studies," she said, adding, "Her discipline and focus stood out."

There were no clear signs then that Mehta had a future in politics. She was not among the outspoken students.

Yet, educators say her journey reflects something deeper — the power of consistency, discipline and professional grounding.

Her rise from a nursing graduate to a national policymaker signals a broader shift in how healthcare leadership is evolving in Nepal. Nurses, often at the frontline of patient care, possess an understanding of health systems and their potential to shape policy.

For AIIMS, this is a moment of pride. For the nursing community, it is one of validation.

Ravindra trapped my daughter, says victim's dad

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Mounika and Ravindra

Chintada Ravindra married in 2024 but allegedly continued the relationship with Polipalli Mounika.

Ravindra, a native of Rajam in Vizianagaram district, remains in custody. Police are probing financial transactions, call records and movements leading up to the killing.

He allegedly told investigators Mounika had taken around Rs 3.5 lakh from him over four years. Her family rejected the claim. "She never depended on anyone for financial support. Ravindra trapped my daughter and killed her fearing consequences," her father Venugopal said, adding that she worked part-time in a bank and also an event management firm.

Ravindra allegedly called Mounika to his flat Sunday night. An argument broke out, during which he is suspected to have strangled her. Investigators said the dispute may have centred on money and threats to reveal their affair to his wife.

After the killing, Ravindra allegedly ordered a knife online and cut the body into three parts. He kept the torso in a refrigerator, packed legs and hip in a trolley bag and hid it under a bed, police said. He allegedly carried the head and limbs to a secluded stretch in Darapalem near Simhachalam hills, burned them with petrol and returned home. Acting on his confession, police retrieved body parts from the flat and a semi-burnt head from the disposal site.

The killing clones a string of grisly murders that have shocked the country in recent years — from the 2022 Delhi "fridge murder" of Shraddha Walkar by Aftab Poonawala, where the body was dismembered and stored in a refrigerator, to the chilling "blue drum" killings reported in UP in 2025 and 2026.

Curable irregularity not a fundamental illegality: Top court

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New Delhi: It was a minor lapse by a trial judge of not affixing his signature to the order framing the charges, but it led to washout of 17 years of trial proceedings, with the Allahabad HC ordering retrial despite the case having reached a conclusive state. Disagreeing with the high court, Supreme Court has said criminal procedure is intended to advance the ends of justice and not thwart it over technicalities.

The SC said the omission on part of the trial judge was not such a "fatal" defect as to vitiate the entire trial and that the procedural irregularity is curable.

In the 2007 murder case which had nine accused, the trial court had framed charges in 2009, but the order for the same remained unsigned owing to the absence of one of the accused. The trial in the case, however, went on smoothly for 15 years, and this issue was raised only at the fag end of proceedings in 2024, making the HC order a retrial.

The bench said, "This court drew a distinction between fundamental illegality and curable procedural irregularity... only those defects which go to the root of jurisdiction or occasion real prejudice can vitiate the proceedings."

15 major terror groups still have safe haven in Pakistan: US report

It Names, Among Others, Jaish, Lashkar And Hizbul Mujahideen

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Despite being removed from the FATF 'grey list', US designates Pakistan as a 'Country of Particular Concern' for religious freedom, as some madrassas teach doctrines that could lead to acceptance of extremist ideology

New Delhi: At a time when Pakistan has inserted itself in the West Asia frame and proposed to position itself as a mediator, the latest US congressional research service (CRS) report offers a sharp reality check. It says Pakistan remains a sanctuary for a wide array of terrorist groups despite decades of state-led military offensives and strategic policy shifts.

Despite the 2014 National Action Plan's mandate to dismantle all armed militias, 15 major groups continue to operate across five broad categories — globally oriented, Afghanistan-oriented, India- and Kashmir-oriented, domestically oriented, and sectarian, the report noted.

Twelve of these 15 groups are designated as Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTOs) under US law, with most animated by extremist ideology. The report underscores a fundamental failure in dismantling these networks, noting that both US- and UN-designated terrorist organisations continue to operate openly on Pakistani soil. Particular emphasis is placed on India-centric groups like Hizbul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Muhammed, which maintain active cadres of 1,500 and 500 armed supporters, respectively.

On the regional front, Pakistan remains a base for India-oriented groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (responsible for the 2008 Mumbai attacks), Jaish and Hizbul, which seek the annexation of Kashmir.

While Islamabad accuses India of backing militants in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa — charges India denies — US officials have conversely linked the Haqqani Network, led by Afghanistan's interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, to Pakistan's own intelligence services.

Despite being removed from the FATF "grey list" in 2022, Pakistan remains designated by the US as a "Country of Particular Concern" for religious freedom, as some madrassas continue teaching doctrines which could lead to greater acceptance of extremist ideology. From the dormant anti-Shia Sipah-e-Sahaba to the active Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, the sheer diversity of these outfits illustrates a multi-layered security challenge that neither airstrikes nor diplomatic maneuvers have been able to resolve, the report said.

The reality is further punctuated by a spike in terrorism-linked deaths that reached 4,001 in 2025 — highest in 11 years. TTP remains the deadliest domestic threat .

First 15 days of houselisting ops are for self-enumeration

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Narayan also hoped a good percentage of people will opt for self-enumeration, another first in the history of Indian census, via the dedicated portal that lists tooltips and FAQs to guide users through the process.

The houselisting operations (HLO) phase of census — which will collect data on housing conditions and amenities — gets under way on April 1 across eight states and UTs, including Delhi's NDMC and cantonment area.

All states/UTs too, barring West Bengal, have chosen separate HLO timelines between April and Sept.

The first 15 days of the 45-day HLO period are exclusively for self-enumeration, another first in the history of census. Over the next 30 days, field visits will be undertaken by over 30 lakh enumerators. "We expect Bengal to also notify its HLO schedule soon," said Narayan.

The HLO phase will be followed by population enumeration in Feb next year. March 1, 2027 shall be the reference date for Census 2027, except for a few snowbound areas. It is during the population enumeration phase that individual data fields like religion, fertility, socio-economic status, migration, and for the first time after 1931, caste, will be captured. The questions for Phase-2 — which will include caste count — will be notified later, said the RGI.

Asked why National Population Register (NPR) updation had been delinked from Census 2027, unlike the original plan for Census 2021, and if this was on account of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls exercise, the RGI ruled out any correlation between the two. TOI was the first to report on June 17, 2025 that NPR updation would not be undertaken alongside Census 2027.

Questions to capture caste info yet to be finalised: Census commissioner

New Delhi: Registrar general and census commissioner Mritunjay Kumar Narayan, when asked about the likely methodology of capturing caste during the population enumeration phase of Census due in Feb next year, said questions for the relevant phase were yet to be finalised, reports **Bharti Jain.** "There are many suggestions on how to collect caste information. All those will be considered, and the best shall be picked and questions framed and finalised accordingly," he said.

'Pink elephant' photo sparks online outrage

Suparna.Roy1@timesofindia.com

The images were shot by Russian photographer Julia Buruleva

Jaipur: A viral photo-shoot in Jaipur featuring an elephant painted in bright pink triggered a wave of criticism online and renewed concerns about the use of animals in creative projects.

The images, shot in Nov 2025 by Russian photographer, Julia Buruleva, resurfaced on social media in March. Buruleva first shared the "pink" elephant post on Instagram on Dec 27, 2025. Later, in a post on Feb 18, she said, "...we used organic, locally made paint, the same kind locals use for festivals, so it was absolutely safe for the animal."

Govt to court: No FIR filed against petitioners

▶ Continued from page 1

Interference in a personal relationship would constitute a serious encroachment into the right to freedom of choice of the two individuals," HC said in its March 18 order.

The state govt's counsel informed the court that both petitioners were major and that no FIR had been registered against them in the case.

The court said the petitioners are at liberty to approach the police with their grievances in case any harm is caused by private respondents or their associates and further directed police to probe their allegations and take necessary action to protect their "life, limb, and liberty".

COMING UP

TOI presents a round-up of forthcoming key events and birthdays of notable personalities. Scan the QR code to post your wishes

March 31

Koneru Humpy
Chess grandmaster; two-time women's world rapid chess champion
humpy_koneru
koneruhumpy

April 1

Murali Vijay
Former Indian opening batter, commentator
mvj888 mvj8

Mohammad Hamid Ansari
Former vice president of India

New Norms
Income Tax Act 2025 to be rolled out with revised rules expected for tax, banking, railway tickets and fuel prices

April 2

Ajay Devgn
National Award-winning actor, producer
ajaydevgn
ajaydevgn

Kapil Sharma
Stand-up comedian, actor, and TV host
KapilSharmaK9
kapilsharma

Remo D'Souza
Choreographer, director, and TV personality
remodsouza
remodsouza

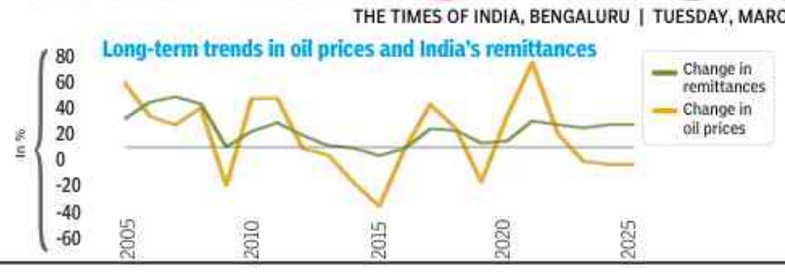
Break Time
The Budget session of the Parliament scheduled to conclude

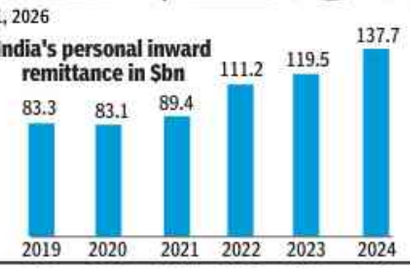
TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2026

West Asia Tensions Test India's Remittance Engine

India's inward **remittances rose 15% to $138bn in FY25, with 38% sourced from GCC economies.** Escalation of the US-Iran conflict could influence oil-driven regional activity, a key determinant of migrant incomes and transfers





Oil link to remittances
The link between oil prices and India's remittances is positive but moderate (correlation 0.3), **meaning higher oil prices generally support stronger money flows from** GCC-based Indian workers

Source: SBI Research

Re breaches 95, logs decade-worst yr

From 92 To 95 Levels In One Day | Down 4% Since West Asia War Began

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The rupee breached the 95-mark against the dollar to hit a lifetime low of 95.22 before ending at 94.83, a new closing low, during a volatile trading session, ending its worst financial year in a decade marked by geopolitical tensions, trade frictions, and adverse capital flows.

The foreign exchange market witnessed a perfect storm on Monday. The Reserve Bank of India's directive forcing banks to liquidate dollar positions above $100 million initially pushed the exchange rate below 93, gaining over 120 paise against the dollar, but it rebounded to the 94 level amid strong demand for dollars. The rupee later breached all previous levels to touch a new low as the US-Israel-Iran conflict intensified.

"It's a rare moment in history when you see a four big figure shift in a single day — the USD/INR opened at 92.95 before spiking through 93, 94, and 95. This reflects a severe market dislocation, with price action signalling massive pent-up demand waiting to be met at lower levels," said Ashhish Vaidya, head of treasury at DBS.

He added that the regulatory intervention triggered a one-off, single-day correction, after which pure market dynamics took control. "The dollar supply shortfall is genuine, and the next logical step to cushion this pressure would be hiking domestic interest rates to a level over the FX-derived yields, to provide a cushion to the rupee and bring in at least some interest rate differential flows, assuming the West Asia war continues," he added. Markets anticipating tighter rates have already pushed up yields on 10-year bonds and call money rates beyond 7%. Dealers attributed the spike to year-end demand, given that Tuesday is a bank holiday.

The weakness in the rupee is the fallout of the conflict in West Asia, which is expected to increase the oil import bill, push up input costs, disrupt supply chains for industry, and trigger a flight of capital from emerging markets. The rupee depreciation, while an outcome of the external situation, will also worsen the macroeconomic outlook by increasing inflation and slowing growth. At the retail level, rupee depreciation is expected to hit sentiment on foreign travel and overseas education. "The visa restrictions have had impact on overseas education while the Middle East (West Asia) conflict has already impacted travel to the Gulf," said M Hariprasad, executive director, EbixCash World Money. He added that while the exchange rate will affect travel decisions in the short term, the long-term trend will see a continued increase in Indians travelling abroad.

The rupee has depreciated around 4% since the start of the geopolitical conflict. The currency's weakness reflects demand for dollars from oil importers and global capital shifts. Market participants said liquidity conditions have tightened following regulatory action.

WHAT TRIGGERED THE HISTORIC ROUT?

Why did rupee see sharp swings?
➤ RBI curbs forced banks to unwind dollar positions, while strong $ demand and rising geopolitical tensions fuelled sharp volatility

Why did bond yields rise?
➤ Historically, RBI's main defence against a weakening rupee is raising the interest rate. Anticipating this, bond yields rose

How do higher rates support ₹?
➤ Higher rates in India open arbitrage opportunities for global players to borrow overseas and lend locally, boosting dollar inflows and supporting the rupee

10-yr gilt yield ends FY26 at 20-month high

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: As the stock and the forex market witnessed huge volatility on Monday, the benchmark yield on 10-year govt securities (G-Secs) jumped to close fiscal 2025-26 (FY26) above the 7% mark, a level not seen since July 2024. During March, the benchmark yields rose 37 basis points (100 basis points = 1 percentage point), the biggest jump since Feb 2017, a Reuters story noted.

On Friday evening, the govt had announced its half-yearly plan for borrowing from the market with the total pegged at Rs 8.2 lakh crore. Bond dealers said the plan matched market's expectations and the choice of papers in the borrowing calendar was selected judiciously so that yields would not harden much during FY27.

Monday was also the last trading session for FY26. During the year in the money market, quite a few unique milestones were reached, and some records were set.

It was for the first time ever, that the RBI infused a record Rs 10 lakh crore liquidity into the system through a combination of open market operations and foreign exchange swaps. The central bank also drastically cut the cash reserve ratio to 3%, a historic low level.

The year also saw the monetary policy committee cutting policy (repo) rate by 100 basis points (= 1 percentage point) to 5.25% now, aimed at spurring growth with low interest rates in the economy.

During FY26, the RBI, for the first time in history, changed its monetary policy stance from 'neutral' to 'accommodative' to 'neutral' again within a span of just two policy meets, between April and June.

Stocks see high volatility in FY26, silver biggest gainer

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: A year that started with volatility with the US President Donald Trump's liberation day announcement that left global investors jittery, ended with even more volatility due to the war in West Asia, also started by the US President.

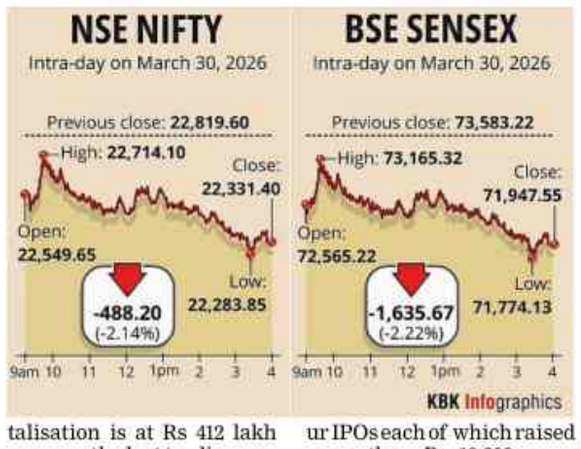
After a record rally in terms of investor wealth in the domestic market, they are back exactly where they started: BSE's market capitalisation is at Rs 412 lakh crore on the last trading session of fiscal 2026, exactly where it was on March 31, 2025. Among the leading stock indices, sensex, after hitting a new life-peak at 86,159 points on Dec 1 last year, closed FY26 at 71,948 points, down 5.4%. And on the NSE, Nifty recorded its life high mark at 26,373 points on Jan 5 and closed the year at 22,331 points, down 3.6%.

During FY26, foreign funds took money off Indian stocks at a record pace with the year's total net outflow at Rs 1.8 lakh crore, the biggest ever annual outflow, data from NSDL showed.

On the other hand, domestic institutional investors (DIIs), that also include mutual funds, poured record amounts into stocks that, to a large extent, acted as the cushion to strong foreign fund selling, market players said. At close of FY26, DIIs had net bought stocks worth Rs 8.3 lakh crore of which Rs 5.1 lakh crore came from the mutual funds.

The year also saw nearly Rs 2 lakh crore raised through the IPO route, also a new record. The year also saw four IPOs each of which raised more than Rs 10,000-crore. Of these, the Rs 15,111-crore Tata Capital offer was the biggest one of the year.

During FY26, among the traditional asset classes, silver and gold were the biggest wealth creators. The price of the white metal in the domestic markets more than doubled to Rs 2.3 lakh/kg, while the yellow metal gained 47% to close near the Rs 1.5-lakh/10gm mark. A major part of these gains came because of the record-breaking rallies in the two precious metals in the international markets, the weakness of the rupee boosted the gains.



India plays for global glory as cos back the game

Sherine.Raj@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Corporate India is stepping up investments in the country's sports ecosystem, with capital flowing into infrastructure, leagues and athlete development, as the sector emerges as a high-growth business opportunity backed by rising returns and policy support.

Industry experts say the trend has accelerated over the past few years, with both govt spending and private participation pushing India's sports economy into what they describe as a 'sweet spot' of expansion. The increased funding is also reinforcing confidence in India's global sporting ambitions, including hosting the Centenary Commonwealth Games in 2030 and pursuing a bid for the Summer Olympics in 2036.

According to KPMG's report, 'Sportlight — The business of sports in India', the investments come at a time when the broader sports industry, currently estimated at around $19 billion, is projected to nearly double to $40 billion in the coming years, driven by growth across media rights, sponsorships, grassroots development and sports infrastructure.

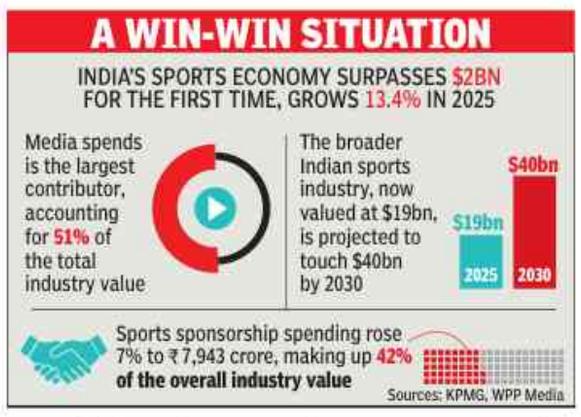
For companies, the real game lies in returns — and the numbers are compelling. Leagues have transformed into high-impact marketing arenas, delivering unmatched visibility and audience engagement. Sponsorships, franchise ownership, and athlete partnerships now offer measurable ROI, brand loyalty, and deep emotional connect with millions — often outperforming conventional advertising channels.

The inflow of corporate capital is also beginning to impact athletes directly, with increased access to sponsorships, better training facilities and exposure to professional ecosystems. Stakeholders say this is helping unlock talent across disciplines beyond cricket, contributing to a more diversified sports culture in the country.

At the same time, improved infrastructure and a more structured sports economy are strengthening India's position as a potential global sporting hub. With large-scale events on the horizon and continued investor interest, the sector is seeing rapid changes across its value chain, from grassroots to elite competition.

Companies, meanwhile, continue to evaluate newer opportunities across emerging leagues and untapped sports segments.

A WIN-WIN SITUATION



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Mistral raises $830 million for AI data centre

Stockholm: Mistral has raised $830 million in new debt to buy 13,800 Nvidia chips for a major data centre near Paris, the firm told Reuters. The deal marks Mistral's first debt raising and underscores growing investor confidence in European AI firms as they seek to challenge the dominance of US tech giants such as Microsoft, Google and Amazon in AI services. REUTERS

Rebellions gets $400mn for expansion

Seoul: Artificial intelligence chip startup Rebellions said on Monday it had raised $400 million in its latest funding round, valuing the company at about $2.34 billion as it accelerates expansion into the US. The round, led by Mirae Asset Financial Group and the Korea National Growth Fund, follows a $250 million Series C in Sept 2025 and brings the company's total capital raised to $850 million, Rebellions said in a statement. TNN

Midas raises $50mn in latest funding

Berlin: German startup Midas has raised $50 million in an early-stage funding round led by venture capital firms RRE and Creandum, with backing from investors including Coinbase Ventures and Franklin Templeton.Other investors in Midas's funding round included Framework Ventures, HV Capital, Ledger Cathay, M1 Capital, Anchorage Digital, FJ Labs and North Island Ventures. TNN

E-comm turns deal breaker at WTO meet

May Open Disputes On Patents Regime

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: WTO member nations failed to agree to any meaningful outcome at the second ministerial meeting in Africa, including their inability to extend the 28-year moratorium on e-commerce, opening the doors for possible tariffs on digital downloads and streaming services.

It also resulted in a public health concern as the freeze on "non-violation complaints" (NVCs) under the TRIPS Agreement also expired for the first time since 1995. This opens the doors for countries to move WTO in case treaty provisions are violated, including in cases, such as the use of compulsory licensing norms to waive patent rights in case of a health emergency.

Besides, the issue of reforming the multilateral agency was not agreed upon, although the WTO leadership led by DG Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala suggested that decisions would now be taken in Geneva, but did not disclose any timeframe.

Sticking To Their Guns

- Members failed to agree on possible tariffs on digital downloads and streaming services
- Countries have stuck to their stance, which has put multilateral trading architecture at risk
- Talks collapsed early Monday (India time) after the US and Brazil could not agree to a moratorium extension timeline

The collapse of talks exposes how countries have stuck to their stance, putting the multilateral trading architecture at risk and opens the doors wider for bilateral deals to take precedence.

Talks collapsed early Monday (India time) after the US and Brazil could not agree to the timeline of an extension in the moratorium, with Washington seeking a four-year freeze, compared with the two years that were on offer. Besides, Brazil wanted to leverage the e-commerce moratorium to push for liberalisation of global trade rules, something that the US was unwilling to offer given its current position.

While India has been seeking formalisation of the proposals on e-commerce, it managed to block the inclusion of China-driven investment facilitation for development, despite having no other country backing it.

"India constructively engaged in all agenda items and in areas where India had strong concerns, we took a position based on the principles of openness, fairness, non-discrimination and inclusivity, which are the cornerstones of WTO engagement... Going forward, India will continue to engage with WTO members on issues of critical importance for the global trade landscape, transparently, constructively and in good faith!" Union commerce & industry minister Piyush Goyal said in a social media post.

Nazara plans ₹500 crore fundraise via warrants

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Nazara Technologies, a diversified gaming and sports media company, said on Monday it plans to raise Rs 500 crore through a preferential issue of warrants, subject to shareholder and regulatory approvals.

Each warrant will be convertible into one equity share and is being issued at Rs 260 per share, the company said, adding that the price reflects a premium to the current market level. Nazara said proceeds from the fundraise will be used to support strategic acquisitions, including the recently announced Bluetile and BestPlay transactions, and to drive growth across its existing business verticals.

"This Rs 500 crore fundraise comes at an important phase in Nazara's journey as we execute our most ambitious growth initiatives," said Nitish Mittersain, joint managing director and chief executive officer of the company, adding that the capital, along with its acquisition strategy, is aimed at building "globally scalable, AI-enabled gaming businesses."

Airtel's data centre arm Nxtra raises $1bn

Funds To Help Grow Biz, Increase Mkt Share

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

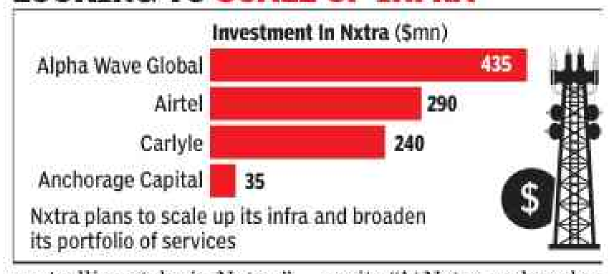
New Delhi: Bharti Airtel on Monday announced an investment of $1 billion by Alpha Wave Global, Carlyle and Anchorage Capital, through their affiliates, in Nxtra Data, the telecom company's subsidiary in the data centre business.

Airtel will also participate in the round as part of Nxtra's efforts to expand its network across the country and accelerate growth.

As part of the pact, Alpha Wave Global will invest $435 million, Carlyle $240 million, Anchorage Capital $35 million, with the rest coming from Airtel, the company said in a statement. "The investors' final shareholding will be subject to finalised post-closing adjustments. Airtel will continue to retain a controlling stake in Nxtra," it said. The data centre outfit plans to extensively scale its infrastructure and broaden its portfolio of services amid rapid growth in the sector.

According to a Savills India report, India's data centre market is expected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate of around 21% between 2024 and 2030 to reach nearly 3,400MW of IT capacity. "At Nxtra, we have built one of India's most advanced and sustainable data centre networks, designed to meet the evolving needs of enterprises, hyperscalers, and govt. With approximately 300MW capacity today, we aim to scale to 1GW in the next few years, targeting around 25% market share," Airtel vice chairman Gopal Vittal said in a statement.

LOOKING TO SCALE UP INFRA



Industrial output grows 5.2% as mfg rebounds

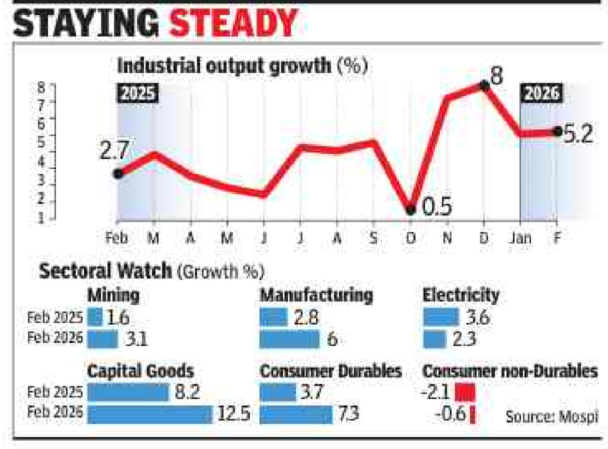
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The country' industrial output growth accelerated in Feb, led by a recovery in the manufacturing sector, but the West Asia conflict is expected to weigh heavily on the crucial sector in the months ahead.

Data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) on Monday showed the index of industrial production rose 5.2% in Feb, a tad higher than the upwardly revised 5.1% in Jan. The manufacturing sector rose 6% in Feb, higher than 2.8% in Feb last year and above the 5.3% in Jan.

Within the manufacturing sector, 14 out of 23 industry groups grew in Feb compared to the same month a year earlier. The top three positive contributors in Feb were — manufacture of basic metals (13.2%), manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers (14.9%) and manufacture of machinery and equipment (10.2%), according to the statistics office. The electricity and mining sector remained sluggish, rising 2.3% and 3.1% respectively. Experts said they expect the West Asia conflict to hurt factory sector expansion. Aditi Nayar, chief economist at rating agency ICRA, said the agency expects IIP growth to decelerate to 3%-4% in March, amid the unfolding adverse impact of the West Asia crisis on some manufacturing segments, both through the price and availability channels, as well as weaker electricity performance in the month.

STAYING STEADY



Governance concerns larger than compliance, says Chakraborty

▸ Continued from page 1

Jagadishan, in an interview to TOI, had said that the action against employees over the AT-1 bond issue in the Gulf coincidentally took place at the same time as the boardroom dispute and had nothing to do with the chairman's exit.

HDFC Bank had responded to Chakraborty's resignation letter by appointing law firms to look into the issues. "Appointing law firms is more of a compliance requirement; my letter mentions a larger governance issue," said Chakraborty, indicating that the bank has not acted upon his letter. Expressing dissatisfaction over the action taken by the bank, he said, "Something went on for eight years, and suddenly we take action."

"If you are addressing concerns like a five-page post-audit report, why should those things arise in the first place? Who will ensure that it will never happen again? The rest otherwise becomes ticking the box. What I am saying is improve the thinking level and root your ethics and values. I find it strange that people are asking me to describe my concern on values and ethics," he said. "We do not dig wells after the fire has taken place. There needs to be avoidance of risky practices. There has been share underperformance, low CASA, and a low-income ratio," he added.

Chakraborty denied there was any issue over the reappointment of Jagadishan. "The matter of Sashidhar Jagadishan's reappointment had not even come to the board for us to look into performance or any issues; how could there be differences about something that had not even been discussed?" He also indicated that the issue of relationships had been overblown. "Personality issues have been overblown," he said.

The former chairman rejected suggestions that his letter had resulted in a loss of value for HDFC Bank. "I completely refute that there was value erosion on account of my resignation," he said. He added that the sensex had declined due to the Iran conflict and disappointment over the Fed's statement.

Chakraborty said there were no insinuations in the letter. "I have only referred to what is in the public domain; if someone is using the word insinuation for my letter, they need to read the dictionary."

34001/263/2526 Mail ID: sepwdbalangir@gmail.com

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
BALANGIR (R&B) CIRCLE: BALANGIR
e-Procurement Notice
BID IDENTIFICATION No: CCE(R&B) BGR/21/2025-26
Letter No-1004 // Dtd. 23.03.2026

The **Chief Construction Engineer, Balangir (R&B) Circle, Balangir** on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in **ONLINE MODE** for the construction of works detailed in the table below from "B", "A" & "Special" Contractors registered with the State Governments and contractors of equivalent Grade/ Class registered with Central Government/ MES/ Railways for execution of Civil works. The proof of registration from the appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the bid.

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2. No. of tender : Building work- 3 Nos.
3. Tender Cost : Rs.10,000/-
4. Class of Contractor : "B", "A" & "Special" Class
5. Date & Time of sale & Receipt of Bids : From Dt. 04.04.2026, 06.55 P.M. to Dt. 20.04.2026 up to 05.00 P.M.
6. Date of opening Bid : Dt. 21.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
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Sd/- **Managing Director**
APADCL

DIPR No: 4945PP/CL/ADVT/1/1/2021-22 Dt:30/03/2026

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Sr. No.	Name of Work	Amount of Work / E.M.D. in Rs.	Eligibility/Tender Cost in Rs.	Time Limit in Months	Division
1	Appointment of Consultant for "Providing Comprehensive Architectural & Engineering Consultancy Services including Masterplan, Internal Infrastructure, External Development & Landscape, Detailed Project Report on the Sustainable Model etc. for Development of Naveen Nagpur on 1710 Acres Land." (IInd Call)	As per Tender Document 10,00,000/-	As per Tender Document 29,500/-	36	Town Planning

Money :- E.M.D. is to be paid by online only. **Plans & Estimates :-** Available in the Technical Section, Head Office, Sadar, Nagpur. **Tender Forms :-** From **02.00 P.M.** on Date **01.04.2026** up to **2.00 P.M.** on Date **08.04.2026** on www.mahatenders.gov.in **Receipt / Submission :-** From **02.00 P.M.** on Date **01.04.2026** up to **2.00 P.M.** on Date **08.04.2026** on www.mahatenders.gov.in. **Opening :-** At N.M.R.D.A. Office on Date **09.04.2026** at 2.00 P.M. or as decided by N.M.R.D.A.

-sd- **Superintending Engineer,**
Nagpur Metropolitan Region Development Authority
Advt. No. : S.E.(NMRDA)/94/2025-26 Dated : 30.03.2026

25001/375/2526

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OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER
RURAL WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION CIRCLE, KORAPUT
At- D.N.K Road, Fire station side, Koraput, Pin-764020

1ST CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. 02/ACE/RWSS/KPT/2025-26/19.03.2026
CORRIGENDUM No. 01 Date: 26.03.2026

Due to some unavoidable circumstances, the following alternations have been made in the time schedules of this office **e-procurement NOTICE NO. 02/ACE/RWSS/KPT/2025-26/ 19.03.2026**

Sl. No.	TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. 02/ACE/RWSS/KPT/2025-26/19.03.2026	Rescheduled Date & Time
1	Availability of Bid document in the website	Dt. 06.04.2026 at 17.00 hours to 17.04.2026 up to 17.00 hours.
2	Last Date of Seeking clarification	During the Office hours of 15.04.2026.
3	Date of Opening of Bid	Dt. 18.04.2026 at 11.00 AM

All other terms and conditions remain unaltered.

Sd/- **Addl. Chief Engineer**
RWS&S Circle, Koraput
OIPR-25001/25115/1/25-26/0004

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION CHANDIGARH
TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Bid Submission Schedule (Online)	Opening Technical Bid (Online)
	EXECUTIVE ENGINEER - Hort. Division No. 1		
1.	DNIT for the work operation, maintenance and watch and ward of fountain in various green belts/ gardens/ parks under the jurisdiction of Horticulture Division No. 1, MC, Chandigarh under Revenue Head. DNIT Amount : Rs. 89,57,526/- EMD. Rs.1,79,151/-, Tender Fee : Rs.3000/- Time Limit : 12 months	01.04.2026 To 08.04.2026 at 3.00 PM	08.04.2026 at 3.00 PM
	EXECUTIVE ENGINEER - SWM Division		
2.	Construction of drain along boundary wall to collect & proper disposal of Leachate at Dumping Ground, Dadumajra, Chandigarh. Approx. Amount : Rs. 3,00,90,282/- Earnest Money : Rs. 6,01,806/- Time Period : 06 Months Tender Fee : Rs. 5,000/-	31.03.2026 at 9:00 A.M To 13.04.2026 at 03:00 P.M	13.04.2026 at 03:30 P.M

Note :- 1) Tender Notice alongwith detailed terms and conditions is available/uploaded on website at www.chandigarh.gov.in or etenders.chd.nic.in

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Hort. Division no. 1, M.C., New Deluxe Building, Room No.401, Sector 17, Chandigarh and SWM Division, Room No. 612, 6th Floor, New Deluxe Building, MC Sector-17, Chandigarh email id : mcc.swm2020@gmail.com

25001/372/2526 E-Mail - sencrwangul@yahoo.co.in ☎ 06764 - 236404

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE,ANGUL
Tender Call Notice for Building works in Odisha
Bid Identification No. Building Online AGL- 39/2025-26
No. 1160 // Dt.24.03.2026 //

1. Name of the work : Building work
2. Total No.of work : 5 No.
3. Estimated cost : Rs.131.81 to Rs.202.96 Lakhs Approx.
4. Class of Contractor : 'B' & 'A' Class
5. Period of completion. : 18(Eighteen) Calendar Months
6. Other details.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding From	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding To	Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender Technical Bid	Date & Time of opening of tender Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Angul	Building-Online - AGL-39/2025-26	10.04.26 at 10.00 A.M	24.04.26 up to 5.00 P.M	23.04.26 upto 1.00 P.M	24.04.2026 at 5.30.00 P.M	Will be intimated later on

(1) For detailed Notice inviting Tenders, Please visit to the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/-A.K.Behera
Chief Construction Engineer,
Rural Works Circle,Angul.
OIPR-25001/25180/1/25-26/0021

34001/278/2526 E-mail ID:cebuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in cebuildings@rediffmail.com Tel. (0674)-2391523

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
File No.-B-II-(H.E.)-15/2025 10320 / Bhubaneswar, the 25th Mar., 2026
Invitation for Bids
1st Corrigendum

Tender Reference No. CE-Bldg-I-56/2025-26
Name of the Works: (1) **"Construction of Annex Building with Training Administrative Support Facilities and 500 Seater Auditorium of ROTI, Gothapatana, Bhubaneswar"**
(2) **"Construction of New Circuit House Building at Dhenkanal"**
(3) **"Construction of Academic Block building (G+6) at Fakir Mohan Autonomous College, Balasore (Completion of balance work)"**

The following changes have been made in Bid Identification No. **CE-Bldg-I-56/2025-26**
1. Bid documents such as DTCN / BOQ etc. can be seen / downloaded from the Govt. Website i.e. **www.tendersorissa.gov.in,** during the period from **dt. 15.04.2026 to 17.00 hours of dt. 04.05.2026** instead of dt. 26.03.2026 to dt. 17.04.2026 for ONLINE BIDDING respectively.
2. Online bids shall be received till **17.00 Hours of dt. 04.05.2026** instead of dt. 17.04.2026.
3. The technical bids will be opened at **11.30 A.M. of dt. 05.05.2026** instead of dt. 18.04.2026.

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Sd/- **Chief Engineer, Buildings-I, Odisha**
Bhubaneswar
OIPR-34001/34117/1/25-26/0046

RAIL LAND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
(A Statutory Authority under Ministry of Railways, Government of India)
Unit No. 702-B, 7th Floor, Konnectus Tower-II, DMRC Building, Ajmeri Gate, New Delhi-110002

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL THROUGH E-TENDER
(RFP Notice No. RLDA/RFP/CT-05 of 2026 Dated 25.03.2026)

Request For Proposal (RFP) For Appointment of Agency For Providing Project Management Consultancy For Crowd Management Works (Construction of Holding Area) at Railway Stations of Indian Railway in Four Packages.

S.No.	Package	Estimated Cost	Bid Document Fee	Bid Security
1.	Package-1, Northern Zone	Rs. 10.31 Crore	Rs. 11,800/- (i.e. @18% GST)	Rs. 6.65 Lakh
2.	Package-2, Eastern Zone	Rs. 8.12 Crore		Rs. 5.56 Lakh
3.	Package-3, Western Zone	Rs. 8.91 Crore		Rs. 5.95 Lakh
4.	Package-4, Southern Zone	Rs. 6.93 Crore		Rs. 4.96 Lakh

Last date of downloading of e-bid Document for participation submission online: 27.04.2026 upto 23:59 Hrs.
Last Date of Submission of e-bid Online: 28.04.2026 upto 15:00 Hrs.
Opening of e-Bids: 28.04.2026 at 15:30 Hrs.

For further details of the project, please visit our website **https://rlda.indianrailways.gov.in** or on e-procurement portal **https://www.tenderwizard.in/RLDA** under the heading **'e-tender'**
For any clarifications, may please contact: -

Shri P.P. Pathak **Dy. General Manager/Station Development** **M: 9910409838** **dgm.sd@rlda.railnet.gov.in**	**For e-bid queries:** **Mr. Suraj Singh (CEL)** **M: 95996 53865** **suraj@etenderwizard.com**

Note:- Any Corrigendum or Addendum will be published only on above mentioned website.
JGM/Tender/Expert M: 9711305031

7001/53/2526

ODISHA STATE CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LTD.
(A Govt. of Odisha Undertaking)
REGISTERED OFFICE: C/2, NAYAPALLI, BHUBANESWAR-751012
CIN: U51211OR1980SGC000894
Tel No: 0674-2395391, Fax No: 0674-2395291, website: www.oscsc.in

Request for Proposal for Selection of Service Provider for e-Auction Platform and Related Support Services for Paddy and Rice
RFP Advt. No. 6414 /OSCSC Ltd., Date: 30.03.26

Proposals are invited from interested Service Provider (SP) registered under the Companies Act-1956/2013 or any other legal entity registered in India and having valid registration certificate and eligibility as per the criteria given in the Request for Proposal (RFP) published in the official website **www.foododisha.in** & **www.oscsc.in** & **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** for Selection of Service Provider for e-Auction Platform and Related Support Services for Paddy and Rice in the state of Odisha. The details of timetable of the RFP are as under.

Sl No	Event Description	Date
1	Publication of RFP in website	31/03/2026 at 18.00 Hours
2	Pre-Bid meeting	08/04/2026 at 15:00 Hours at Office of OSCSC Ltd., C/2, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751012 Queries to be submitted through email only to **mdoscsc@gmail.com** on or before 07/04/2026, 17:00 Hrs
3	Last Date and time for submission of Proposal	23/04/2026 at 17:00 Hours through online at **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**
4	Opening of Technical Proposal	24/04/2026 by 11:00 Hours at Office of OSCSC Ltd. C/2, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751012
5	Technical Presentation	02/05/2026 at 11:30 Hours at Office of OSCSC Ltd. C/2, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751012
6	Opening of Financial Bid	11/05/2026 11:00 Hours Any Change to the aforementioned scheduled date, the same will be intimated through official website.

Any amendment in the tender document due to decision in pre-bid meeting/extension of bid, if any, shall be notified in the websites mentioned above. The proposals shall be submitted through online mode at **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** The authority reserves the right to cancel any or the entire selection process without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
Managing Director
Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited
OIPR-7001/7002/1/25-26/0010

25001/374/2526

ଅତିରିକ୍ତ ମୁଖ୍ୟଯନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ
ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ପାନୀୟଜଳ ଯୋଗାଣ ଓ ପରିମଳ ମଣ୍ଡଳ,କୋରାପୁଟ
At- D.N.K Road, Fire station side, Koraput, Pin-764020
Email-acerwsskpt@gmail.com
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER
RURAL WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION CIRCLE, KORAPUT

1ST CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. 01/ACE/RWSS/KPT/2025-26/17.03.2026
CORRIGENDUM No. 01 Date:- 26.03.2026

Due to some unavoidable circumstances, the following alternations have been made in the time schedules of this office **e-procurement NOTICE NO. 01/ACE/RWSS/KPT/2025-26/17.03.2026.**

Sl. No.	TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. 01/ACE/RWSS/KPT/2025-26/ 17.03.2026	Rescheduled Date & Time
1	Availability of Bid document in the web site	Dt. 07.04.2026 at 17.00 hours to 16.04.2026 up to 17.00 hours.
2	Date of Seeking clarification.	During the Office hours of 07.04.2026 to 15.04.2026.
3	Date of Opening of Bid.	Dt. 17.04.2026 at 11.00 AM

All other terms and conditions remain unaltered.

Sd/-
Addl. Chief Engineer,
RWS&S Circle, Koraput.
OIPR-25001/25115/1/25-26/0003

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TIMES SPORT
THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2026

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ENDLESS ENTERTAINMENT BEGINS

At 15, a knock for the ages

Sooryavanshi Slams 3rd Fastest IPL Fifty After RR Bowlers Skittle Out Sanju & CSK

Sourav.M@timesofindia.com

Guwahati: The 15-year old lived through a first-ball drop. But Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was undeterred, immediately picking up the cue from the Rajasthan Royals' bowlers who ran through the Chennai Super Kings batting line up on Monday.

Set with an easy chase for a winning start to their 2026 Indian Premier League campaign, Rajasthan Royals' wonder boy tore into the CSK attack to script a 15-ball half-century — the joint third fastest in IPL history. His experienced opening partner Yashasvi Jaiswal took a backseat and was happy to just rotate strike and give Sooryavanshi more balls to face. Jaiswal remained unbeaten on 38 off 36 balls.

The teenager departed scoring 52 off 17 balls hitting four boundaries and five sixes, but the match was as good as over by then. The 128-run target was attained, the win against Chennai Super Kings coming in just 12.1 overs with Royals losing only two wickets.

When Sooryavanshi departed, the scoreboard read 75 for one in 6.2 overs.

RR were 74 without loss after the Powerplay compared to CSK's 41/4 at the same stage and that sums up the story for the night. Dhruv Jurel (18 off 9 balls) and captain Riyan Parag (14 not out off 11) played their part to round off a comfortable eight-wicket victory.

Last season the Super Kings had a real problem in the middle order, which ultimately saw them finish at the bottom of the 10-team roster. In the campaign opener, the five-time champions' entire batting order crumbled under overcast conditions at Barsapara Cricket Stadium.

Home side Rajasthan Royals' overseas pacers, Englishman Jofra Archer and South African Nandre Burger, exploited the 'English' conditions to their advantage to rock the Super Kings' top order before the other Royals bowlers, including their veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, joined the party to skittle CSK for 127 in 19.4 overs.

Losing wickets at regular intervals, CSK were down to 9/94 in 16th over before Jamie Overton's fighting 43 off 36 balls helped them to set a 128-run target.

Spending considerable time under cover due to intermittent showers over the past week, the Guwahati pitch was moist and offered bounce and pace. The CSK batters failed to live up to the challenge.

Sanju Samson, the wicket-keeper-batter who showed red-hot form in the recently-concluded T20 World Cup, fell cheaply in his first game in yellow shirt against his former side. Left-arm quick Burger was right on the money in the last ball of second over, accounting for the Kerala opener with a 140 kmph-plus length delivery which rattled his off stump. The movement off the pitch cut short his debut for the Super Kings.

Next over, again in the last ball, Archer's 143kmph-plus fuller delivery upset CSK captain Ruturaj Gaikwad's middle stump.

Burger struck in the next ball, the first of his fourth over. His sharp bouncer took India's U-19 World Cup-winning captain Ayush Mhatre's gloves and wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel did the rest. CSK were down to 19/3.

AP

POWER-PACKED: RR opener Vaibhav Sooryavanshi hits one of his five sixes on Monday

SCOREBOARD

CSK: S Samson b Burger 6, R Gaikwad b Archer 6, A Mhatre c Jurel b Burger 0, M Short c Jaiswal b Sandeep 2, S Khan lbw b Jadeja 17, K Sharma lbw b Brijesh 18, S Dube c Bishnoi b Jadeja 6, J Overton run out 43, N Ahmad c Jurel b Archer 1, M Henry c&b Bishnoi 5, A Kamboj not out 7; **Extras:** (lb9, nb1, w6) **16; Total: (19.4 overs) 127; FoW:** 1-14, 2-19, 3-19, 4-38, 5-51, 6-57, 7-74, 8-82, 9-94; **Bowling:** Archer 4-0-19-2, Burger 4-0-26-2, Brijesh 3-0-17-1, Sandeep 2.4-0-22-1, Bishnoi 3-0-16-1, Jadeja 3-0-18-2.

RR: Y Jaiswal not out 38, V Sooryavanshi c Sarfaraz b Kamboj 52, D Jurel b Kamboj 18, R Parag 14; **Extras: (b4, lb1, w1) 6; Total (2 wkts, 12.1 overs) 128; FoW:**1-75, 2-99; **Bowling:** Henry 3-0-40-0, Khaleel 3-0-17-0, Kamboj 3-0-27-2, Noor 2-0-24-0, Overton 1-0-14-0, Short 0.1-0-1-0.

RESULT: **RR won by 8 wickets.**

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Ruturaj Gaikwad is bowled by Jofra Archer

UB Photos

15 Balls taken by Sooryavanshi to reach 50, making him the joint third fastest half-centurion in the IPL. Yashasvi Jaiswal (13 balls), KL Rahul (14) and Yusuf Pathan (15) were the other Indians to achieve the feat in 15 balls or less. Sooryavanshi is the second fastest Royals player to reach the mark, behind Jaiswal.

62.12 Average recorded as a pair by Sooryavanshi and Jaiswal while aggregating 497 in eight innings, including a 100+ and four fifty-plus.

—Rajesh Kumar

KKR, CA seeing red over Green

Gaurav.Gupta@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Australian allrounder Cameron Green, at Rs 25.20 crore, the IPL's costliest-ever overseas player, is at the centre of a controversy. When the Aussie didn't bowl a single over in Kolkata Knight Riders' defeat to Mumbai Indians in Sunday's high-profile, high-scoring clash at the Wankhede, it raised questions over why KKR splurged so much on an allrounder who was not being called in to bowl.

After KKR failed to defend 220 and went down by six wickets, captain Ajinkya Rahane further raised hackles in his reply to why Green didn't bowl. "That question you need to ask Cricket Australia," said Rahane, indicating that the board may have asked Green to avoid bowling.

In response, Cricket Australia clarified that Green has a lower back injury and that KKR were fully informed about it. "Cameron has a lower back injury, which is being managed but requires him to abstain from bowling for a short period. You would note he also did not bowl in his last Sheffield Shield game for Western Australia due to the same issue," a CA spokesperson told **TOI** on Monday. "Cameron is currently rebuilding his bowling loads in India with a view to returning in around 10-12 days. KKR has been communicated with and is fully aware of this information," the spokesperson added.

CAMERON GREEN

During the IPL 2026 auction in Nov last year, Green was registered as a specialist batter instead of an allrounder, sparking concerns around his fitness. Green later clarified it was a clerical error by his manager and that he was fit to bowl in the IPL, triggering a record bid for him.

Green was part of Australia's 2026 T20 World Cup campaign, where he bowled just a few overs and on returning home featured in a Sheffield Shield match only as a batter. Across his last eight matches, he has bowled just 7.1 overs.

On Sunday, KKR used six bowlers but all proved expensive as MI chased down the target in 19.1 overs for a six-wicket win. At the post-match presentation, Rahane admitted that Green not bowling disrupted KKR's balance.

Former India opener Aakash Chopra criticised the situation, saying it was unfair for a franchise to pay for an allrounder and receive only a batter. "If you pay for an allrounder and get a batsman in return, you should, at the very least, be eligible for a refund," Chopra wrote on X on Sunday.

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The men India forgot, but IPL can't

Gill, Iyer In Focus As PBKS Host GT

Hindol.Basu@timesofindia.com

Pix: Getty Images, Nitin Sharma

96 runs off 59 balls by **Shubman Gill** in Mumbai on April 8, 2022 is the highest individual score for GT vs PBKS.

97 Runs off 42 balls by **Iyer** in Ahmedabad on Mar 25, 2025 is the top individual knock for PBKS vs GT. —**Stats:** Rajesh Kumar

FACE-OFF

PBKS vs GT

TV TIME: 7.30 PM
STAR SPORTS
JIOHOTSTAR

HEAD TO HEAD

PBKS	GT
3	3

LAST FIVE MATCHES

PBKS	L	W	L	W	L
SRH	L	L	L	W	W

VENUE: NEW CHANDIGARH

WEATHER 26°C

ODDS

PBKS	GT
8/10	5/4

New Chandigarh: The nets at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Stadium here on Monday told you everything you needed to know, if you were paying attention.

Shubman Gill was at it for over an hour. Unhurried, precise, that characteristic backfoot game of his flowing like something rehearsed in dreams. Kagiso Rabada came at him, then Mohammed Siraj, then Prasidh Krishna, and yes, there were the occasional plays-and-misses that reminded you he is human after all. But mostly it was Gill doing what Gill does: timing the ball in a delectable way. When he shifted to range hitting, the intent was clear. The Gujarat Titans captain is not playing this IPL just to be consistent. He has heard the noise.

Just adjacent to those nets Shreyas Iyer was operating with no enclosure at all. No nets. Just the open sky and balls disappearing into stands with alarming regularity. A couple of them landed in the midst of the journalists watching. Close shaves. Shreyas barely noticed. He went back to what he has come here to do: hit the ball very, very hard.

Two batters. Two captains. Both consistently, almost stubbornly, ignored by the national selectors. Tuesday's IPL game between Punjab Kings and Gujarat Titans has the charge of men with something to prove.

Iyer's story is the more maddening of the two to tell. He has now led three different franchises to an IPL final — Delhi in 2020, Kolkata to the title in 2024 and Punjab to the summit clash last season. Last year, he scored 604 runs at a strike-rate north of 175, the best among the season's top 10 run-getters. Iyer last played a T20I for India in Dec 2023.

Punjab Kings won't need reminding of what their captain brings to the table. But they will need to ensure the rest of the batting fires with him. "The level of play that we saw from Shreyas (Iyer) last year with the bat was probably as good as he's ever had in an IPL, and I can just see that hunger in his eyes probably burning more than ever now," Punjab head coach Ricky Ponting said on Monday.

Gill's case is different in texture. His runs have never been the issue. Since 2023, only Virat Kohli has scored more in the IPL. The question has always been strike-rate, intent, the willingness to go over the top early. Last season, a strike-rate of 155-plus showed movement in the right direction.

With Matthew Hayden coming in as Gujarat's batting coach, the conversation around Gill's six-hitting will only grow louder.

In this run fest, can bowlers claw back?

Hindol.Basu@timesofindia.com

New Chandigarh: There is a particular sound that has come to define the IPL evening these days — not the applause of a boundary, but the thud of a ball disappearing several rows back, followed by a collective murmur that asks: How far did that go?

In this version of T20 cricket, now 200 is not even a par total. For the bowlers, increasingly in the IPL, it feels like survival rather than contest.

Ricky Ponting and Matthew Hayden, two men who spent much of their careers making bowlers' lives miserable, now sit in IPL dugouts as coaches and watch their bowlers suffer.

The IPL, always a batter's playground, has leaned into excess nowadays. The Impact Player rule, Punjab Kings' Ponting suggested, hasn't just deepened batting line-ups; it has liberated them. "It's a really hard thing for the bowlers now," Ponting said. "The modern T20 batter... they're big, strong athletes. The bowler has to miss by a couple of inches on line or on length, and they pay the penalty. The ball is going over the fence and it's going a long way over."

"The margin for error has shrunk to something almost invisible," said Gujarat Titans' Hayden, "Once upon a time in the IPL, the approach was incremental... from taking a single to hitting a six. Now, it is on the other spectrum. Six, four... then maybe a single. It is a reversal not just of order, but of philosophy."

When intent is this absolute, how do you disrupt it? The answers, both coaches agree, are not revolutionary, but old-fashioned and executed with precision.

Hayden listed them out like a checklist: wide yorkers, yorkers at the stumps, slower offcutters into the pitch. "Variations are not new, accuracy is everything. You don't have to be a rocket scientist," Hayden said, "But you do have to be near-perfect."

Ponting leaned into the tactical. "Change of angles, better use of the bouncer. The search for the unfamiliar — a mystery spinner, perhaps, someone who can buy a few deliveries of doubt in a format that rarely allows it," he said.

Pakistan players deny ball-tampering charges

AFP

IN A SPOT: Qalandars' Fakhar Zaman (R) and Shaheen Afridi

Lahore: Pakistan's prolific batter Fakhar Zaman, pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi and Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza have denied ball-tampering charges, stemming from the Pakistan Super League match between Lahore Qalandars and Karachi Kings at the Gaddafi Stadium.

Zaman, 35, was charged on Sunday night by match referee Roshan Mahanama with a Level 3 offence under Article 2.14 of the PSL Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel. Zaman was found to have violated Article 41.3 of the PSL playing conditions, which prohibits any action that alters the condition of the ball.

PSL

Appearing before the former Sri Lankan cricketer, Zaman denied the charges against him. The charge relates to an incident just before the final over of the Karachi Kings' innings, when they needed 14 runs to win. Zaman was seen in discussion with Haris Rauf and Qalandars' captain Afridi before the over.

Shortly thereafter, umpire Faisal Afridi requested the ball and, after inspecting it with his colleague, determined that its condition had been altered. The match referee is expected to hold another hearing within the next 48 hours before a verdict.

If the match referee confirms that the ball was tampered with, Zaman and Team Lahore Qalandars could face serious penalties. PTI

HEFTY FINE FOR NASEEM SHAH

Lahore: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday imposed a PKR 20 million ($72,000) fine on fast bowler Naseem Shah for a now-deleted social media post that criticised Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's presence at the PSL during an ongoing regional crisis.

The post, made during the first match of the 2026 Pakistan Super League (PSL), sarcastically commented on the "queen" treatment given to Maryam, who is the daughter of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and niece of incumbent PM Shahbaz Sharif, at the Gaddafi Stadium.

"Why is she being treated like the Queen at Lords?" Naseem had posted in reference to Maryam. This was after the PCB banned fans from attending the PSL matches in Lahore and Karachi to conserve fuel and adhere to government austerity measures in view of the Gulf war.

The PCB announced that its disciplinary committee had found Naseem guilty of breaching clauses of his central contract and violating social media guidelines.

Naseem was issued a show-cause notice on March 27, immediately after Maryam visited the stadium as chief guest for the PSL opening match.

The tweet was quickly deleted, and it was claimed the account was hacked, but the PCB did not accept this explanation. His social media adviser has already been terminated and blacklisted by the PCB. PTI

Rohit 2.0: A mix of mayhem and magic

Gaurav.Gupta@timesofindia.com

Hitman's Fastest IPL 50 Shows Why Veteran Is Still An Arresting Watch

Mumbai: The fire still burns in their belly. The way Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have kicked off this season of the IPL, few would question whether they can last another 18 months in international cricket. The two titans ruled the league's opening weekend. While Kohli smashed a breathtaking 38-ball 69* to power Royal Challengers Bengaluru's 202-run chase against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the season opener, Rohit was even more brutal a day later in the familiar environs of the Wankhede against a hapless KKR attack.

Before an adoring home crowd, the 38-year-old blasted a power-packed 78 off 38 balls — complete with with six sixes and six fours — to help Mumbai Indians pull off their highest IPL chase, making light of a 221-run target and in the process, ending their 13-year jinx of never winning the season opener.

Clearly, both ageing greats seem to be operating on muscle memory in white-ball cricket — a trait that automatically seems to kick in after years at the crease. In the twilight of his career, Sunday was like watching the Rohit of old, only a leaner and fitter version with him having shed nearly 15 kg coming into this season.

The beauty of his sublime knock was the ease with which he executed his strokes, especially those on the off-side. It hardly looked like Rohit was returning to competitive T20 cricket after a ten-month gap. His last outing in the format came in the IPL 2025 second qualifier against Punjab Kings last June. In his 19th IPL season, there was no rust, only dominance as he tore into KKR's bowlers from the outset.

Inside-out lofted drives over extra cover, trademark pulls, and cross-batted swipes to deep midwicket flowed effortlessly. Rohit took on the pace trio of Vaibhav Arora, Blessing Muzarabani and Kartik Tyagi, before targeting Varun Chakravarthy with a four and six through covers and a flick over backward square leg.

By the end of the powerplay, Rohit had galloped to a 23-ball fifty — his 50th IPL half-century and fastest in the league.

"Rohit Sharma seems to age like fine wine. He last played a T20 game in June, and the shots he played tonight ... this is fabulous to watch," MI head coach Mahela Jayawardene said after the six-wicket win.

Playing only one format internationally now and having last featured in the ODI series against New Zealand in Jan, Rohit has left no stone unturned in preparing for the IPL. He reported early to the MI camp, spent long hours in the nets facing Hardik Pandya and other pacers.

"For the first time in many years, I had him from day one of the camp. He played well in practice games, and we ran many simulations to get him going. I was happy with the way he was hitting the ball," Jayawardene said, adding that freedom from captaincy has helped Rohit rediscover his rhythm.

"It has freed him up. He is calmer," said the Lankan.

SNAP SHOTS

Preeti, Deepak begin with win

Asian Games bronze medallist Preeti Pawar and Deepak registered contrasting victories to begin India's campaign at the Asian Boxing Championships in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on a positive note on Monday. In the women's 54kg category, Preeti delivered a commanding performance to secure a 5-0 unanimous decision victory over Kazakhstan's Elina Bazarova. In the men's 70kg category, Deepak edged past Uzbekistan's Khavasbek Asadullaev with a 3-2 win.

Sheetal named 'Para Archer of the Year': Sheetal Devi has been named 'Para Archer of the Year 2025' by World Archery. The 19-year-old from Jammu & Kashmir became the first and only female armless archer to win gold at the World Para Archery Championships by claiming the top honours in the women's compound individual event in Gwangju, South Korea last year.

Korir banned for five years: The 2021 New York Marathon winner, Albert Korir of Kenya, was banned for five years after he admitted doping, track and field investigators said on Monday. Korir tested positive for the blood-boosting substance CERA, a modern version of EPO, in three different samples taken in Kenya last Oct while he was training to run in New York.

Spurs close in on De Zerbi: Tottenham have targeted Roberto De Zerbi as their preferred candidate to lead the troubled Premier League club's fight to avoid relegation, according to reports on Monday.

K'taka wrestlers bag gold: Karnataka extended their lead at the top of the table at the Khelo India Tribal Games with two gold medals from the wrestling mat in Ambikapur. Rohan Doddamani bagged Karnataka's first gold medal outside the swimming pool when he defeated Rajasthan's Dinesh Solanki by technical superiority in the 60kg Greco-Roman final. Manisha then wrapped up the day for the table toppers with a hard-fought 12-8 win by points over Himachal Pradesh's Muskam. Karnataka now has 17 gold, six silver and five bronze medals.

Naeem steals the show: Naeem scored four goals as Ashco Hockey Club claimed a 14-0 win over Major Dhyanchand Hockey Club, Dharwad in the KSHA 'B' division hockey league championship Bengaluru on Monday. Royan also excelled as he scored a hat-trick.

Result: Ashco HC 14 (Naeem 2, 49, 55, 56; Royan 31, 35, 45; Sundhar Raj 12, 14; Govind 26, 54; John Bosco 6; Sham 16; Sridhar 28) bt Major Dhyanchand HC, Dharwad 0. **Today's match:** Major Dhyanchand HC, Dharwad vs Dhyanchand HC, Bengaluru (3 pm).

Robinson scores hat-trick: Robinson A starred with a hat-trick as RR Nagar claimed a 11-0 win against Malleshwaram in the Chief Minister's Cup in Bengaluru on Monday. In the other match, Shivaji Nagar beat Padmanabha Nagar 4-1.

Results: Shivaji Nagar 4 (Sachin Kumar S 10, 68, Darin Marcel Christopher 21, Santo 44) bt Padmanabha Nagar 1 (Yashas S 8); RR Nagar 11 (Luke Anthony 8, 17, Michael E 11, Sureen S 27, Robinson A 29, 47, 54, Jackie Sunil M 70, Kevin Lourdanathan A 84, Rivoldo JC 85, S Sachin 87) bt Malleshwaram 0.

Missed opportunities for Divya, Pragg

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FIDE

DEEP THOUGHTS: Divya Deshmukh (left) and Vaishali Rameshbabu

She found the best move with just four seconds remaining on the clock, but Divya Deshmukh missed the match-winning opportunity against compatriot Vaishali Rameshbabu in the second round of the Women's Candidates chess tournament in Cyprus on Monday.

The all-India battle was the lone exciting game of the day after 12 of the 16 Candidates chose peace as six of the eight games ended in a draw. In the Open Candidates, Praggnanandhaa R had control over his clock, also had an extra pawn, but with his black pieces the 20-year-old Indian star fell short of material to sign a peace treaty with higher-ranked Chinese GM Wei Yi. The game lasted 46 moves.

CANDIDATES

While all the four games in the women's section were drawn, it was only after an incredibly dramatic sequence in the Divya-Vaishali clash. While Divya missed the match-killer move, Vaishali exchanged her queen on the time control 40th turn to bring parity. When Vaishali made a 34th-move blunder, it was advantage Divya, and she chose the perfect move with just four seconds remaining on her clock. On the 37th turn, Divya made a mistake when she overlooked a queen-exchanging move, and Vaishali equalised. Four moves later, the Indian GMs split their points.

Divya said, "I have seen Vaishali's queen sacrifice in advance, but simply missed the winning alternative." A couple of Petrov's Defence games was the order of play in the earlier games. In a repeat of their 2017 World Championship match, former women's champion Tan Zhongyi of China chose Petrov's Defence to play out a 32-move draw with Ukraine's higher-ranked GM Anna Muzychuk.

In the open section, reigning World Cup winner Javokhir Sindarov failed to utilise his opening advantage with the white pieces after lower-ranked Matthias Bluebaum chose Petrov's Defence and played a series of three notable moves in the endgame to force a peace treaty after 42 moves.

Spotlight on Williams as India face Hong Kong

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AIFF

ALL SET: Ryan Williams

Kochi: All eyes will be on Ryan Williams when India take on Hong Kong in their final AFC Asian Cup 2027 qualifier at the Jawaharlal Nehru International Stadium on Tuesday. While both sides are already out of contention, this fixture is far from just a mere formality, with valuable FIFA ranking points still up for grabs and a chance for India to sign off on a positive note in front of their home fans.

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIER

Much of the spotlight will be on 32-year-old winger Williams, who is set to make his India debut. Born in Perth, Williams drew attention last year, when he relinquished his Australian citizenship to represent India. Despite the buzz around his potential inclusion, head coach Khalid Jamil remained non-committal.

India head into the game placed at the bottom of Group C with just two points from five games. Even a win over Hong Kong would not be enough to lift them off the foot of the table, as third-placed Bangladesh, with five points, hold the advantage on head-to-head record. India are also the only team in the group yet to secure a victory. When these two teams met in Singapore in October last year, Hong Kong registered a 1-0 win.

Live, 7pm, Fancode

Advani storms into final

Pankaj Advani continued his fine run in his maiden pool Nationals, powering into the men's 9-ball final with an authoritative win in the semifinals in Ludhiana on Monday.

The PSPB pro scored an 11-5 win against Karnataka's Kushal Chandrashekar. In the title clash on Tuesday, the 40-year-old takes on Chandigarh's Nitin Sharma, who edged out S Shrikrishna 11-10 in the other semifinal.

POOL NATIONALS

In the other semifinal, which was locked 10-all, Nitin made it a start-to-finish affair with his break. After potting 1 and 3 with his break, the Chandigarh pro continued his fine show to set up a meeting with Advani. **Results: Men (semifinals):** Pankaj Advani (PSPB) bt Kushal Chandrashekar (Kar) 11-5; Nitin Sharma (Chg) bt S Shrikrishna (PSPB) 11-10. TNN

Knight Regent for feature

Times News Network

Hyderabad: LVR Deshmukh-trained Knight Regent is expected to win the Arden Knight Plate, the main event of the races to be held here on Tuesday. The first race starts at 3 pm.

SELECTIONS: 1. Zurbaran Plate 1200M: Fox Worth 1, Zindabad 2

2. Chaitanya Chakram Plate 1400M: NRI Range 1, Dream To Fly 2

3. Bhakranangal Plate 1600M: Real Thalaivaa 1, Lake Michigan 2

4. Ardent Knight Plate 1600M: Knight Regent 1, Corte Madera 2

5. Prince Of Berar Plate 1100M: Divine Tiger 1, Grit 'N' Grace 2

6. Cabaret Plate 1200M: Knight Crusader 1, Knotty Senorita 2

7. Sweet Girl Plate 1400M: Golden Bourbon 1, Bold Indian 2

Day's best: Knight Regent.

ARDAKAN PREVAILS

Pradeep Chouhan-trained Ardakan— ridden by Vivek G— won the Cursetjee Dhunjishaw Salver, the feature at the Mumbai races on Monday.

Italy hoping to scale 'Everest'

Italy have one more obstacle standing between them and a return to the World Cup in the shape of Bosnia and Hercegovina, who host the Azzurri on Tuesday in what promises to be a tense qualification play-off final in Zenica.

FOOTBALL

A battling win over Northern Ireland in last week's semifinal did little to ease Italian supporters' fears about missing out on a third straight World Cup, goals from Sandro Tonali and Moise Kean stopping a lacklustre display from turning into another disaster. Coach **Gennaro Gattuso** called Tuesday's showdown in Zenica "Everest" due to the weight of expectation weighing on his shoulders as he tries to guide Italy back to the world's biggest football tournament. The prize for Italy is a spot in Group B at this summer's finals alongside co-hosts Canada, Switzerland and Qatar, and something to look forward to for a powerful football nation that has fallen behind its rivals since last lifting the World Cup in 2006. AGENCIES

Doue stars with a brace in France win

Landover (Maryland): Desire Doue scored twice as France showcased their attacking firepower and strength in depth with a 3-1 friendly win over Colombia, in their final outing before coach Didier Deschamps names his World Cup squad. Jaminton Campaz pulled one back for Colombia, who were quickly overwhelmed despite a decent start. REUTERS

FRIENDLY

Beagles down Dharwad

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Anirudh and Devcharan top scored with 12 and 11 points respectively as Beagles scored a 69-12 win against Dharwad District 'B' in the boys' section in the State Junior Basketball Championships here on Monday. In the girls' section, DYES, Vidyanagar defeated Vijayapura District 39-26.

Results: Super League: Boys: Beagles 69 (Anirudh 12, Devcharan 11) bt Dharwad Dist 'B' 12 (Tejas 6) HT 34-4, DK Dist 65 (Divith 18, Lydel 15) bt Lakshyan 53 (Pranav 19, Mahasvin 13) HT 41-28, PPC 81 (Akshath 26, Ryan 16) bt Mys Dist 'B' 24 (Anurag 5) HT 38-10, JSC 66 (Arshad 27) bt Mandya Dist 13 (Yashwanth 5) HT 37-10, Viveks SC 60 (Anshul 30, Sandesh 10) bt Southern Blues 29 (Dishanth 12) HT 31-18, Chikkamagalur Dist 66 (Om Shetty 12, Rishabh 12) bt Dharwad Distt 'B' 36 (Tejas 10) HT 50-21, DK Dist 65 (Divith Shenava 20, Lydeo Samvel 13) bt DYES, Bengaluru 47 (Vaibhav 27 Mohan Gowda 10) HT 37-24, Hoop-7 BC 84 (Dev 18 Samarth 16) bt Mysuru Dist 'B' 34 (Roshan 09 Rohith 09) HT 53-17, HBR BC 74 (Samveg 32 Siddartha 18) bt Mandya Dist 18 (Yashwanth 04) HT 44-8, Mysuru Dist 'A' 67 (Harshith 23 Shlok 15) bt Southern Blues 63 (Dishanth 21) HT 25-26, MNK Rao Park BC 64 (Vijayeendra 15 Vasisht 12) bt Dharwad Dist 'B' 34 (Ramesh 11) HT 37-13.

Girls: DYES Vidyanagar 39 (Deepika 12) bt Vijayapura Dist 26 (Shivy Bai 11) HT 18-14, PPC 43 (Samitha 14) bt Chamrajnagar Dist 10 (Tanushree 4) HT 19-4, Rajmahal BC 41 (Shreya 13, Sanvi 12) bt Dharwad Dist 'B' 21 (Harshitha 4) HT 25-6, Beagles BC 59 (Purvi Shika 17, Medha 15) bt Mysore Dist 'B' 32 (Apoorva 23) HT 19-14, Mounts BC 70 (Nilaaya 23, Nidhi 21) bt Vijayapura Dist 63 (Sakshi 23, Shivabai 22) HT 41-35, Mysuru Dist 'A' 63 (Shravani 23, Aanchal 13) bt Mysuru Dist 'B' 55 (Apoorva 26) HT 32-25, Mandya Dist 53 (Kusuma 11) bt Dharwad Dist 'B' 16 (Samruddhi 8) HT 29-3, B'lore Vanguards 42 (Aarushi 14, Sanjana 8) bt Chamrajnagar Dist 9 (Monisha 7) HT 21-7, Viveks SC 63 (Jeyashree 19, Ruth 18) bt Lakshyan BC 23 (Niya 11) HT 26-5.

BASKETBALL

Dominant Sinner bags 'Sunshine Double'

AFP

Jannik Sinner beat Czech Jiri Lehecka 6-4, 6-4 in a rain-hit Miami Open final on Sunday to become the first man to complete the coveted 'Sunshine Double' without dropping a set. The Italian world number two won 92 per cent of his first-serve points and saved all three break points he faced en route to a victory that extended his string of Masters 1000 matches without dropping a set to 17.

Sinner, who played around with a football ahead of a match that was delayed by about 90 minutes due to rain, broke early for a 3-1 lead and then leaned on his serve to close out the opening set with a hold at love. The rain returned during the opening game of the second set, forcing players off the court for about 90 minutes.

TENNIS

World number 22 Lehecka, playing in his first Masters 1000 final, fought off five break points over a pair of service games in the second set followed by a hold at love to go 4-3 up before Sinner took over. Sinner made good on his sixth break point opportunity of the second set to pull ahead 5-4 and then closed it out on his serve when he sent a forehand volley to the open court on his first championship point.

Sinner is the first man since Roger Federer in 2017 to win the Indian Wells and Miami titles back-to-back, a feat known as the 'Sunshine Double' given the tournaments' respective locations in California and Florida. By doing so, Sinner joins a club that, in addition to Federer, also includes Novak Djokovic, Andre Agassi, Marcelo Rios, Pete Sampras, Michael Chang and Jim Courier. REUTERS

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